

Meet Him Inside:— Britain's Ace Frogman Of World War II.

# Adventure

EVERY TUESDAY 3<sup>o</sup>

No. 1733—APRIL 5, 1958.

## THE GUINEA-PIG GOALIE



1—A deep hush had fallen over the capacity crowd at "neutral" Westhampton. The battle between the First Division giants, Redstoke Rovers and Barham Boro', in their Semi-Final of the F.A. Cup, had come to a standstill. Lanky Hutton, the captain of the Redstoke side, lay stretched out in his goal. In bringing off a brilliant diving save, the 'keeper had knocked himself out on a goal post. Now, as Weepy Watson, the Rovers' trainer, sponged the blood from Lanky's head, the goalie began to recover.



2—"I'm all right, Weepy," Lanky told the trainer, as he scrambled shakily to his feet. "You can fix me up during the interval." Mr Tate, the referee, watched until Watson had scurried off the field, then signalled for the corner to be taken which Lanky had conceded. The Boro' right-winger crossed the ball close to the goal-line. Lanky leapt out to clear it, but, still groggy from his accident, mistimed his punch. The ball screwed sharply from his fist and the Barham inside-left nodded it home.



3—The spectators were wild! A Barham supporter turned to a Redstoke man who had been crowing earlier in the game when the Rovers levelled the scores at one all. "Ho! Ho!" he chuckled. "They'll pile on the goals now!" The Rovers had other ideas. When Lanky led his team out after the interval, he was feeling fighting fit. He had given his team-mates a special pep talk, and they were "raring to go!" At the line-up, however, Jinky puzzled everyone as he pulled on a pair of bright blue gloves.



4—"My hands are freezing cold," Jinky complained loudly, looking around. "Let's get this game started." Just then, the ref's whistle sounded, and before the startled Jinky could move, the ball had been passed behind him and a Boro' attack was under way. Alf Watney, the Rovers' right-half, charged up and bundled the Barham left-winger off the ball. Watney slid the ball along the ground to Jinky, who made ground fast, dodged a sliding tackle, then raced for the Barham goal. (Continued on back page.)

# SMILER'S Cash Prize PAGE

## CASH FOR CHUCKLES



### Jokes, Riddles, Illustrated Jokes.

Did you know that they can win you cash? How? Well, all you have to do is write your favourite joke, illustrated joke or riddle on a postcard and send it to:—

Smiler's Page,  
"Adventure,"  
12 Fetter Lane,  
Fleet Street,  
London, E.C.4.

Sandy—"I've lost my dog."  
Derek—"Did you advertise for him in the paper?"  
Sandy—"That wouldn't help. He can't read!"  
—M. Cooper, 72 Latchmore Lane, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.



Private—"But, sir, I thought I was pulling the lever that reversed the tank. I didn't know it would fire the gun!"  
—D. Green, 25 Fairfield Road, Priors Wood Estate, Taunton, Somerset.

Judge—"How long is it since you were last up in court?"  
Accused—"Twenty years."  
Judge—"Where have you been, since then?"  
Accused—"In prison!"  
—M. Fennelly, 21 Athol Gardens, Ovenden, Halifax, Yorkshire.

If a horse's head points north where will its tail point?  
To the ground!  
—P. White, 9 Chagford Road, Reading, Berks.

Merchant—"Look here, you told me that that safe you sold me last month was burglar-proof. Well, it was broken into last night."  
Salesman—"Well, isn't that proof that you've had a burglar?"  
—M. L. Middlemiss, 9 Collesburg Road, Beckenham, Kent.



Manager—"Would you mind phoning my home and saying that I shall be late?"  
—R. Corrin, 53 Coleridge Street, Liverpool, 7.

Lady—"How much are those chickens in the window?"  
Butcher—"A pound each."  
Lady—"Did you raise them yourself?"  
Butcher—"Yes. They were only fifteen shillings yesterday!"  
—W. English, 61 Montreal Street, Culluck, Carlisle, Cumberland.

What time is it when the clock strikes 13?

Time it was mended!  
—A. Berracloth, 22 Morris Gardens, Dartford, Kent.

David—"Can you tell me why that man is carrying his umbrella?"  
Tom—"No."  
David—"Because it can't walk!"  
—C. Carty, 9 Silwell Avenue, Boythorpe, Chesterfield.

Tommy—"Do rabbits bark?"  
Steve—"Of course not."  
Tommy—"That's funny. This book says that rabbits eat lettuce and bark!"  
—B. Wylie, 54 Springbank Terrace, Thurso, Caithness.

Impatient Diner—"Waiter, must I sit here until I starve?"  
Waiter—"Oh no, sir. We close at six!"  
—A. Faulkner, 27 Agate Road, Hammersmith, London, W.6.

Prison Warder—"I'm sorry we kept you in a week too long."  
Convict—"Oh, that's all right. Just keep it off the next time!"  
—J. Morton, 40 Hedgehope Terrace, East Chevington Drive, near Morpeth, Northumberland.

City Boy—"Haven't I seen your face somewhere else?"

Country Boy—"I don't think so. It's always been between my ears!"  
—R. Rutherford, 177 Bowditch Gardens, North Hutton, Newcastle-on-Tyne 6.

Jimmy—"I swallowed a pin today."  
Bill—"Did it hurt?"  
Jimmy—"No—it was a safety-pin!"  
—C. Denegun, 11 Daisy Hill Gardens, Newry, Co. Down.

Why do house slippers last so long time? Because they are never worn out!  
—C. Saddler, 41 Sandford Avenue, Blackheath, Birmingham.

## JOKE OF THE WEEK

The lad who has earned himself the title of CHAMPION JOKER this week is:—

1. JAGGS,  
26 RIVER SIDE,  
CAMBRIDGE.

Here is his joke, which is the one Smiler considers to be the week's best:—

Father—"What is the matter, Ned?"  
Ned—"Insomnia, pneumonia and indigestion."  
Dad—"But you can't be suffering from all these things."  
Ned—"It's not that I'm suffering, Dad—it's the spelling for my homework!"  
For this first-class laugh-raiser, he will be receiving SMILER'S SPECIAL PRIZE, a pair of ROLLER SKATES!



IF YOUR ENTRY IS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE, SMILER PAYS YOU:—

2d A WORD FOR JOKES.

3d A WORD FOR ILLUSTRATED JOKES.

4d A WORD FOR RIDDLES.

Rent-Collector—"You say your father is out, but I can see his hat on the hat-stand."  
Sammy—"He couldn't stand in the cupboard with his hat on, could he?"  
—W. Lyon, 9 Wigton Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, near Wigan.



Lumberjack—"He's obviously not felled a tree before. Well, he'll learn by experience!"  
—E. Fotts, 69 Shafte Street, Scotwood, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5.

Visiting Supporter—"Does your team ever score goals?"

Local Supporter—"I don't know, I've only watched them for two seasons!"  
—H. Jowitt, 6 Garden Terrace North, Craghead, Stanley, Co. Durham.

How many insects are needed to fill a house?  
Ten ants (tenants)!

—J. Adams, 58 South Road, Cupar, Fife.

Bill—"Why did they kick your brother out of the submarine?"

John—"Because he liked to sleep with the windows open!"  
—J. Travers, 82 Rossville Street, Derry, N. Ireland.



Onlooker—"Phew! What's he smoking in that pipe—old socks?"  
—K. Ashby, 116 Broomwood Road, Battersea, London, S.W.11.

Assistant—"What are you making, Professor?"

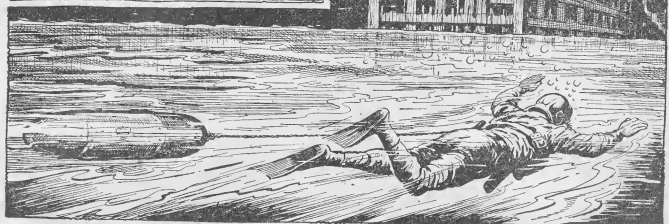
Professor—"I am making a bomb that will save thousands of lives."

Assistant—"But how can a bomb save thousands of lives?"

Professor—"This is a special type of bomb. It does not go off!"  
—"Adventure" Reader, 25 Hilsa Point, Alton Estate, Southampton.

The story of Britain's ace frogman in his underwater war against the Nazis!

# SPLASHER SWIMS TO DANGER!



## SECRET MISSION.

**CHIEF** Petty Officer "Splasher" Morton looked out from the draughty open bridge of the motor launch into the black darkness ahead of him. It was a cold, wet night in February 1943, and he knew he was going to be colder and wetter before the night was through. Out there, somewhere in the blackness, was the coast of France, and if the Wavy Navy Lieutenant who was skipper of M.L. 542 was any good at navigation, the night ought to be hiding a small port called Le Salin. As a regular in the Royal Navy, Splasher was always a little distrustful of the men in the Volunteer Reserve, but he consoled himself with the thought that the Wavy Navy boys ought to know their way across the English Channel by now.

"You're growing jittery, boy," he told himself quietly. "You know fine that 'Soupy' Richardson wouldn't have sent you out with a skipper who didn't know his way around." He turned to the Lieutenant, who was leaning over the bridge rail, binoculars clapped to his eyes, looking for the first glimpse of the coast as the M.L. slid slowly and almost silently through the glassy black water. "I think I'll go down now and climb into my fancy dress, sir," Splasher told him.

Lieutenant Bradshaw grinned at him.

"Good idea, Chief. We should be throwing you overboard in about ten or fifteen minutes."

Down in the tiny wardroom, where his gear was stowed, Splasher undressed and put his kit on. First, an all-covering white garment rather like a pair of warm winter combinations, made of a new synthetic fibre, covered him from the

soles of his large feet to his powerful shoulders. Over it went a close-fitting suit of rubber material, moulded to the shape of his body, with a hood which covered his head and neck, so that only his face from forehead to chin was exposed.

The Service revolver, in its waterproof holster, his knife, torch, compass, and pack of emergency rations were stowed in a belt which he carried round his waist. Finally, throwing his duffel coat over his shoulders, he carried his mask, with its twin oxygen cylinder harness, and the clumsy-looking, duck-like webbed flippers for his feet, on to the deck. There he laid them beside a metal container.

On the bridge, Lieutenant Bradshaw eased down his engine speed to dead-slow ahead and M.L. 542 moved forward, a low, black shape in the night, mixing hardly a ripple in the still water. As the thickest figure in the rubber suit, looking like an invader from another planet, padded up to the bridge beside him, Bradshaw spoke in a voice just above a whisper.

There it is, Chief—Le Salin!

The skipper pointed into the black night ahead, and as Splasher's eyes adjusted themselves to the darkness he saw a patch of denser shadow. It gradually took shape as the end of a breakwater, with the dim, uneven outline of the houses of a town behind.

"Good luck," whispered Bradshaw.

As he adjusted his mask, fitted the cylinder harness on his back, and slipped on his flippers, Splasher began muttering.

There was nothing Splasher liked better than a good grumble to himself. As one of the Navy's highly-specialised divers, an expert with any kind of diving gear, from deep-water suits,

like olden-day armour, to skin diving in nothing but mask, bathing trunks, and flippers, he was called on to do all sorts of jobs. He always had a good grumble to himself about it.

He fastened the line from the metal container to the belt round his waist and lowered the cylinder over the launch's side into the water. It worked fine, he noticed with satisfaction. The container did not sink, neither did it float on the surface. Someone had judged the weight of the additional frogman suit inside it to perfection. It was not always like that with equipment that some chairborne stooge in an experimental station worked out for a special mission. But this lot looked just the job. It had enough buoyancy to float, but it would follow him below the surface when he dived, and not bob along on top after him, attracting the attention of every German sentry within a mile of the water.

He settled his mask comfortably, leaving the flap open so that he could breathe normally as long as he was on the surface, and climbed over the side.

"Don't catch cold!" joked one of the sailors leaning on the rail.

Splasher scowled back at the sailor, but said nothing. He kicked away from the launch and swam easily towards the breakwater, moving silently towards Le Salin. As he swam, he thought of how little he really knew about the job he was on. Captain Richardson, his boss—S.O.S.U.P., as he was known—Senior Officer Special Underwater Projects—or Soupy, had not said very much. The whole lot smacked of the cloak and dagger boys to a very nasty degree.

Splasher was not very fond of the cloak and dagger department. They were so used to

double-crossing other people in the Services' Intelligence Departments and the Secret Service, that you were never very sure that they would know when they might be double-crossing themselves.

Anyway, that was not his business. His job was simple—very simple. All he had to do was swim up the River Salin, past a lot of trigger-happy Jerry sentries, find a clump of trees shaped like the three feathers of a Boy Scout's badge, and whistle "Anne Laurie". Then, if he were lucky, the bod might appear. If he were unlucky, a lot of nasty Jerries with guns might appear. But, if he were lucky, all he had to do then was to get the bod into the spare frogman suit he was towing behind him, and bring him back down the river to the M.L.

"Child's play, really," he muttered. "But it's a pity that kids are so rough nowadays."

## E-BOAT SABOTAGE.

**APPROACHING** the end of the breakwater, Splasher swam more slowly. He took a look over his shoulder at the cylinder, and was pleased to note that he could not see it. A jerk on his towline reassured him that it was still there, so he inspected the breakwater for the inevitable sentry. At first he could see nobody. Then he became aware of a small dull red glow in the angle of the wall on the far side.

Well pleased with the sentry's slackness, Splasher shut his mask flap, put his head under water, and let himself sink. When he judged he was far enough below the surface to make no disturbance, he flicked at the water with his flippers, gave a powerful thrust of his muscular legs, and glided down through the dark water into the River Salin.

There was another sentry at the far end of the breakwater. He looked more wide-awake than his pal, so Splasher dived again, aiming for a jetty which he could see looming up out of the darkness about two hundred yards upriver. Twenty feet underwater, he slipped along over the sandy river bed until he saw the wooden piles of the jetty in front of his mask, lumps of more solid blackness in the water, with feathery fronds of seaweed flapping idly round them.

He surfaced and worked his way round the jetty, with his head just showing above the water, and the trailing cylinder held close to him on a short lead in case it should bang against a pile. At last he reached the landward corner of the jetty, where he could get a good look at the rest of the river. The clouds which had overcast the scene when the M.I. came towards the coast had thinned, and, although there was no moon, the starlight provided enough illumination for him to see fairly well. He did not much like what he saw.

Anchored in midstream, just off the village, were the long, sleek shapes of two German E-boats.

"Nasty, nasty," muttered Splasher grimly. "I don't much fancy having that lot chasing us when we leave. They could make rings round Bradshaw's. Pity I don't have a couple of nice explosive charges with me. I could fix them fine with that."

He realised a moment later that, even if he had the charges, he would not be able to use them. Loud bangs were not part of this operation.

He knew very well that the E-boats were none of his business, and that Soupy would have been very displeased with him for even thinking about writing them off. Still, there they were, and they were a great temptation. Also, they were a danger to the success of his op. Something really ought to be done about them. Then Splasher had an idea as he spotted a small rowing-boat. He was bound to have some boat aboard, Splasher decided, and a nice length of rope would come in very handy!"

He ducked underwater and dived, rolling over on his back with the cylinder held tightly under one arm until he could see the dark shape of the rowing-boat over him. He surfaced carefully, taking care not to touch the boat, for a rocking rowing-boat on a calm night like this might give a watchful sentry something to think about.

Splasher worked his way round to the bow, and, after

another careful look around, reached into the boat. His hand quickly found the ring on the stempost to which ropes were attached, and he grinned happily at himself. His groping fingers touched two separate knots on the steel circle. It took him just a few seconds to follow with his fingers the painter rope running over the side towards the jetty, and to know that the other rope must be attached to the anchor.

The frogman slipped his knife from its sheath, and, working blindly, with only his long arms over the gunwale, slashed the razor-sharp blade through the rope and drew the cut end over the side into the water. When the rope came taut he reached over the gunwale and, grasping the little anchor firmly by its shank, he lifted it over the side into the water.

Although it was not very heavy, it made keeping afloat difficult, and it took a minute or two to wind the rope round his waist and adjust things so that his swimming balance was not upset. Then he set out for the E-boat's long live took him right underneath where they lay, one alongside the other, moored fore and aft to buoys in midstream. He surfaced just downriver of their square sterns and had a look around.

There was no stirring on either of the boats, although there must have been a duty watchman somewhere. Splasher lashed the cylinder to the down-stream buoy, and, taking the anchor with him, dived under the stern of the first E-boat. He clipped his torch from his belt, and its dim blue light showed him the three screws of the E-boat's powerful engines just below him. Pulling himself down the rudder post, the frogman hooked his leg round the post between the rudder and the centre screw. There he went to work comfortably.

He cut a short length from the line round his waist, and with it he lashed the anchor across the E-boat's main propeller, winding the short line round the anchor round the shaft. Then he cut short lengths from the rope and wound them round the other two propellers.

"That should give them a nice lot of trouble," he decided. "If the E-boats will anchor with clip lumps out of the main prop, and if the other two turn more than half a dozen revs without seizing up, then I'm a monkey's uncle!"

With the weight of the boat's anchor gone, he felt extraordinarily light and strong. One kick of his flippers brought him under the transom of the other E-boat. Here he gleefully wound the remainder of the rope round the three propeller shafts, without cutting it, so that when the engines started up, the shafts would cut against each other and pull the rope tighter. He was feeling very pleased with himself when he surfaced beside the buoy and reclaimed his cylinder.

## STRANGE MEETING.

**REALISING** that he had used up rather a lot of his limited supply of oxygen, Splasher only submerged until he was past the E-boats, then surfaced. He began to make his way upstream, swimming carefully so as not to make too much noise or disturbance in the water.

Rather to his surprise, the Chief Petty Officer found the clump of trees without difficulty. Splasher paddled in gently, keeping a sharp lookout for any movement on the bank, and, when his feet touched bottom, he eased his revolver from its waterproof holster and moved slowly on to the land.

This was the most nerve-wracking part of the business. If the bod he had been sent to fetch were there, that was fine. If not, and anyone were to hear him, softly whispering "Annie Laurie," he might well become unpleasantly suspicious.

He squatted under a bush just below the clump of trees and pulled back his helmet to listen. The light wind rustled the branches above his head, and once he heard an owl hoot in the distance, but there was no sound of any human movement.

He listened again, ran over the tune once in his head, pursed his lips, and began to whistle softly. There was no answer, nothing at all except the movement of the wind in the trees. He whistled again, a little louder this time. He was only halfway through the verse when he heard something and broke off. Not far away someone else was whistling. The unseen whistler took up the tune where Splasher had stopped, and completed it. A moment later Splasher heard the sound of a man moving stealthily along the bank towards him from farther upstream.

He rose to his knees and held his revolver at the ready. About ten feet away a twig cracked, then the bushes in front of him parted, and a tall, dark figure loomed over him.

"The night has eyes," the man murmured, looking down on the faint reflection of the starlight gleaming dully on the barrel of Splasher's revolver.

"For those who can see in the dark," replied the Chief Petty Officer, completing the password.

Splasher thrust the revolver back in its holster. He unscrewed the rounded end of the cylinder and drew out the frogman's gear. The man began to undress silently while Splasher explained quietly how to put the equipment on.

The man followed Splasher's instructions carefully. In the dim light it was difficult to see his face, and what could be seen of it was dirty and unshaven, but he was a big man, over six feet tall, and when he spoke, his voice—which the diver decided was definitely English—had an unmistakable ring of authority.

When he had donned the frogman's suit, the man took

some things from the pockets of the clothes he had been wearing and wrapped them in sheets of oiled silk which Splasher had brought with him. Then he filled the pockets of his cast-off clothes with stones.

Splasher explained how the mask worked and how to kick with the flippers to dive and surface.

"By the way," Splasher demanded suddenly, "can you swim?"

"Yes, I can swim," the tall man nodded. "I've never used one of these outfits before, but I'm all right in the water."

"Good," smiled Splasher, "then all you've to do is follow me. I'll lead the way. Dive when I dive, and I'll try to keep near you under water and give you a tap when it's time to come up again. Got that?"

"Yes," rapped the man impatiently. "Let's get on with it."

"Just take it easy, mate," warned Splasher in his best Chief P.O.'s manner. "I'm the senior officer on this trip, so just you do what you're told!"

The tall man said nothing for a moment.

"Very good, Chief," he grunted. "Whenever you're ready."

## RISKY JOURNEY.

**THE** two men slipped quietly into the river, and out in midstream they stuffed the weighted clothes into the cylinder and dropped it to the bottom of the river. They let the current carry them down as far as the bend, but there Splasher got a nasty shock. His sabotage had been discovered.

Over the sterns of the two E-boats large arc lamps were hanging, while below them a small boat was lowering a heavy-suit diver into the water. There were clear signs of troops moving on both banks of the river, orders were being barked out, and from the bows of the two boats, searchlights were sweeping the river to seaward.

While they were still above the circle of light shed by the arc lamps the Chief P.O. took his companion by the arm.

"This is how it's done," he hissed through his mask flap.

"We'll do a piggy-back with you underneath. I there's not so much chance of being spotted that way. I'll keep my hands on your shoulders, and you keep us both off the bottom. If you feel you're drowning, forget it—it's a cleaner death than shooting!"

The man nodded without speaking, then rolled over, diving neatly as Splasher had told him to do. Splasher followed him down, getting above him and placing his hands on the other man's shoulders to guide him.

They slid, fish-like, just above the river bed, with Splasher watching the illuminated patch in the water made by the arc lamps and steering his companion as close to the bank as he dared. Once a big rock

(Continued on page 107.)

## BE TALLER

I Guarantee to increase your height, in 6 to 12 months, with no surgery, no gland and spinal discovery. Increased height 2-5 in. Amazing testimonials. Guaranteed results. Full Course 10-6. Details free for 2d stamp sent under plain cover. J. H. MORELEY, 28 (B.F.17), Dean Road, London, N.W.2.

Knocker is posing as a hero, and now he's faced with a hero's job—rescuing workmen from a blitzed factory!

# YOU'VE GOTTA USE YOUR LOAF!



THE RELUCTANT V.C.

**YOURS** truly, Knocker Norris, must be the only private in the British Army who won the Victoria Cross on the train between Birmingham and London. If you don't believe me, you can ask my pal Willie Sprockett. He was there at the time.

I'd like to tell you a bit more about my experiences in the last war. This Victoria Cross caper, for instance.

It all started out in France. The infantry mob that me and my pal Willie belonged to, had landed there right at the start of the invasion of Europe.

Well, you know how things went out there. We clouted the Germans, and they clouted us back. A right carry-on it was, but we got the Germans winkled out a bit at a time, and started to advance up into Holland and Belgium.

Those Germans were real hostile. I had to use my loaf all the time—and the way I used it was to keep it well down. It was the only way of stopping the Germans from blowing it off.

The trouble was that me and Willie got attached to a section led by Captain Prodger. You couldn't keep your head down with Prodger about. He was really enjoying the war.

Prodger wasn't very big, but he was a real man-eater. He had a big cavalry moustache, and a wuff-wuff way of talking, and once or twice, when we were resting, I gave the boys a bit of a laugh by taking him off. But there was no time for laughs when Prodger got weeping in action.

The Germans didn't find him very funny, I can tell you. One of his favourite tricks was to sneak up on an enemy tank

and pop a grenade neatly through an observation slit. It gave me goose-pimples just to watch him.

Finally, we were held up by a German mortar battery that was lobbing bricks down on our line of advance. Captain Prodger led us in an assault on the position.

We outflanked the battery, carved our way through a screen of Germans, and burst in on the battery. Prodger was in front, blasting away with a sub-machine-gun. Me and Willie were close behind.

It was a real rough five minutes. Willie did nicely at close quarters. My pal Willie may not have been very bright, but he had the right build for banging German helmets down over German skulls.

As for me, I managed the best I could. The way I looked at it, if I didn't do the Germans, they'd do me. I wasn't keen on getting duffed up, so I waded in after Captain Prodger.

When the dust settled, we were in control of the battery, and Prodger was wearing a big grin under his moustache.

"Exciting, what?" he chirped. "Good work, lads!"

A bit later on, Sergeant Rudd came along and told Willie and me that we had to report back to base. That suited me, but Ruddy might have made his invitation a bit more tactful.

So you've landed a cushy number back at base, have you, Norris?" he growled. "What's the wangle this time?"

"You cut me to the quick, Sarge," I protested. "I haven't done any wangle."

I got a bit of a shock when I discovered that Captain Prodger was going back with us.

"We'll have to watch this, Willie," I remarked. "Prodger's the sort of geezer who'd

volunteer to go and kidnap Hitler. If we're not careful, we'll find ourselves being parachuted over Berlin."

But we had a pleasant surprise when we were wheeled in to the headquarters of General Bulstrode, our Corps Commander. To begin with, the General announced that Captain Prodger had been recommended for the award of the Victoria Cross.

"And I'm told you two men played a prominent part in the attack," General Bulstrode said to me and Willie. "I want you to help Captain Prodger with some propaganda on the Home Front."

"How's that, sir?" I asked, a bit wary, since I wasn't sure what we were being let in for.

"I'm sending you back to England," explained the General. "The civilian population are having a drab time. Many of them are working night and day in the munitions factories to turn out the armaments we need. It will give a boost to their spirits to meet a hero from the battlefield, and to hear his stories of the good use we're making of their munitions."

Prodger's large moustache drooped.

"Talk about myself, sir?" he gasped. "I couldn't do that!"

"You heroes are always modest!" chuckled the General. "I expected it. That's why I want Norris and Sprockett to go with you."

They've seen you in action at close quarters. They can describe things that it might embarrass you to talk about." He gave us the eye. "Do you think you can do that?"

"I too true, sir," I crowed. It was the best news I'd had since Sergeant Rudd went

down with mumps. A nice trip back home, all laid on, and I hadn't had to strain the old loaf to arrange it. Captain Prodger still seemed doubtful.

"I'd rather stay in the fighting area, sir," he mumbled.

"This job is as important as any you've tackled, Captain," declared the General. "It's vital to keep up the spirits of our civilian workers. You can do a great deal of good by making this tour."

"That's right, sir," I chimed in. "Willie and me feel the same as the Captain, but I reckon this trip is a duty we have to carry out."

"Well, if you put it like that, Norris," I mused, said Captain Prodger.

"We're in the Army to obey orders, sir," I reminded him. "And if the Army orders us on a cushy—an arduous tour back home, we have to sink our personal feelings and obey."

So that was settled. Captain Prodger, me and Willie packed our kit to go back to England. We were all set for a nice little holiday, and all expenses paid. That's what I thought at the time, but it turned out a bit different.

## STAGE FRIGHT.

THE first stop on our tour round England was at Birmingham. We were flown across from France in an R.A.F. plane with the full Top Brass

Birmingham, of course, was the centre of the biggest industrial area in the country, and that was why we started there. It suited me. Anywhere in England was a nice change from a foxhole in France.

Poor old Prodger wasn't so happy. The red ribbon of the V.C. was on his chest, all nice and new, but he kept trying to hide it. I'd never seen him worried in action, but he was scared stiff now.

"I can't face an audience, Norris," he mumbled. "What can I say?"

"You leave it to me, sir," I told him. "I'll be there if you get stuck."

We were escorted along to our first factory by the managing director. He explained to Prodger how everybody was looking forward to meeting such a hero, and what a great honour it was. Prodger looked as if he wanted to curl into a ball and roll away.

All the workpeople had been gathered into their canteen to listen to Prodger. They started clapping when we walked on to the platform, and Prodger went red to his ears.

The managing director said a little piece to introduce Prodger, then called on the hero of the day to say a few well-chosen words. Prodger shuffled forward, goggled at the sea of faces, and opened and shut his mouth. He looked more like a herring than a hero.

## A piece of gold found in Australia was 4 feet 9 inches long.

This was where Knocker had to do his stuff. I stepped forward smartly, whipped off a salute, and spoke up.

"Allow me, sir," I voiced, then turned to the audience. "Captain Prodder's natural modesty prevents him from talking about himself, but it will give me great pleasure to deliver a short address!"

Prodder sank back into a seat with a sigh like a balloon going down. The floor was mine, and I got cracking.

Well, I really held that audience. I described the hardships of war, and the dangers to be faced. Right in the middle of the danger was Captain Prodder, I told the audience. I could hear Prodder coughing, all embarrassed like, but I took no notice. If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well.

I explained how Prodder had won his V.C., with his faithful men backing him up. That was Willie and me, of course. For a moment, I wondered if I might have overdone it a bit, but the audience lapped it up.

Keep on turning out the armaments," I finished up, "and men like Captain Prodder will see they are put to good use!"

To rousing applause, I sat down. The only person in the hall who didn't look pleased was Prodder. He was peering round in a hunted sort of way, looking for the exit.

The Captain was mobbed before he could get away. A yelling crowd of factory girls surrounded him, waving autographs. I had a very brief glimpse of Prodder before he went under. The geezer who used to think it a lark to take on German tanks was frightened to death!

We got him out at last. He was still shaking when we were in the taxi heading for the station.

"That was the most terrifying experience of my life!" he croaked.

Our next stop was London. Trains were pretty crowded in these days, but I had a word with the guard. I explained that we were travelling with the famous Captain Prodder, V.C., and he found us a compartment on our own.

"It's no good," Prodder burst out, before we were well clear of Birmingham. "I can't go on with it! Audiences scare me stiff! I'm going back to my unit!"

It was a serious situation. If Prodder backed out, what happened to our little jaunt round England?

"You saw that audience to-day, sir," I coaxed. "Every single one of them raving about you! Production will hit new heights at every place you show yourself! You've got to carry on!"

Prodder shook his head. He was the most reluctant hero you ever saw. But I'd got a final suggestion ready.

"We can't abandon the tour, sir," I declared. "But if you really can't face audiences,

how about you and me changing places?"

"Changing places?" spluttered Prodder.

"We're about the same build," I went on. "We just swap uniforms, and I become Captain Prodder!"

Prodder stared at me, and fingered his moustache.

"We can arrange the tash as we like," I pointed out.

I fumbled in my pack, pulled out a false mouser, and clapped it on.

"I just happened to have it with me, sir," I grinned. "Amateur theatricals, you know."

"I thought it wiser not to explain that I'd used the tash when taking off Prodder to give the lads a laugh."

"Do you think it would work?" mused Prodder doubtfully.

"Why not?" I asked. "These factory people have seen your picture, but they've never met you. If you shave off your tash, you'll be Private Norris, and I'll be Captain Prodder. Then I can do the talking. I can handle that all right."

Prodder was nearly sold. I kept on at him, and in a couple of minutes he'd agreed. Willie pulled down the blinds of the compartment, and we switched uniforms. I fixed my false tash firmly in place, and Prodder went along to the toilet to get rid of his.

When he came back from his shave, we looked at each other. There he was, Private Norris to the life. And there I was, Captain Prodder, the hero, with three pips on my shoulder, and the V.C. ribbon on my chest. It must have been the quickest promotion in history.

"You leave it to me, sir," I beamed. "Just remember you're a private and I'm a Captain. I'll lead the rest."

"I'll try to," mumbled Prodder, feeling his bare upper lip.

"Is that the way you address me?" I barked, tapping the pips on my shoulder.

"That's better, Norris!" I replied.

### DOODLEBUG DANGER.

TWO men from a London factory were waiting for us when the train pulled into Euston. I stepped forward and introduced myself as Captain Prodder.

They swallowed it without a murmur, for I'd changed my voice to go with the part. You know the trouble most officers have in talking. They sound as if somebody was strangling them in the middle of a gargle. Well, I put on that sort of voice, instead of my usual clear English, and they shook my hand in the welcome suitable to a hero.

Prodder stayed in the background. He was willing to let me take all the limelight. We all marched out of the station with the fellows from the factory.

They had a car waiting for

us. Our tour was a bit crowded. Having spoken in Birmingham, we had spent the afternoon travelling, and now we were due to address an evening shift at a London factory. Still, it was better than doing fatigues with Sergeant Rudd.

We were just going to get into the car when the factory geezers stopped and stared up at the sky. I heard a sort of buzzing noise above the sound of the traffic. Other people were looking up as well. Suddenly the noise stopped.

The two factory men threw themselves flat on the ground. People all round us were doing the same.

"Get down!" yelled somebody to us.

Well, after you've done a bit of fighting in an infantry mob, you don't ask questions about an order like that. Willie and me and Prodder flopped flat. There was a pause, then an explosion somewhere in the distance.

As soon as the bang died away, people stood up, brushed themselves, and went on about their business, cool as they were used to it.

"What was that?" I asked one of the factory men.

"A doodlebug!" he said. "When you hear the engine cut out, the safest thing is to get down and stay down!"

I'd heard about doodlebugs, but I'd never come across one before. The Germans were launching them from France at Southern England, and London in particular, in the hope of breaking civilian morale.

There was a lot of buzz, were really like pilotless planes. They had stubby wings, and they were propelled by a small motor. The body of the plane was mainly bomb. When the engine stopped, the plane came down, and the bomb went up.

They caused plenty of havoc, but the Londoners took a lot of scaring. There was a big, cheerful audience waiting for us when we reached the factory.

Prodder squinted through a door at them, and went pale.

"You don't need me on the platform with you, Norris," he mumbled. "You can handle it."

"Okay, sir, you go and take a nice walk round," I whispered back.

Prodder disappeared, looking grateful.

"A very modest man, Private Norris," I explained to the factory geezers. "Like a lion in action, but just can't bear publicity. But don't worry, I'll do all the talking you want."

The head man told me that only half the shift were in the audience. The other half were still working, so that production would not be held up. I should have to give my talk twice, with the workers coming down to listen when the first audience went back to work.

"Suits me," I chirped. "I can talk as long as you like."

When me and Willie marched out to the stage, the

audience gave us a reception fit for heroes. We were introduced, and I started off with my little piece.

As I had to tone it down a bit this time, of course, I was supposed to be Captain Prodder describing his own adventures, and I didn't want to sound as if I'd got a bob on myself. People like heroes to be modest.

Going easy on the big-headed stuff, I played up the part taken by my faithful men Private Sprockett and Private Norris. Willie simpered when the audience gave him a big hand.

"Then there is Private Norris," I declared. "He is too modest to appear on this platform, but a braver, more loyal soldier never wore British uniform!"

Good stuff, eh? But for some reason, the audience didn't bite this time. I was a bit hurt. It seemed to me that Private Norris was entitled to some applause.

The audience were shuffling about, and looking up at the ceiling, as if started again trying to hold their attention. Vaguely I heard a sort of buzzing noise, but I didn't pay much attention. I was too busy talking.

The buzzing stopped—and so did I. My audience had disappeared. One second they were there, the next instant every seat was empty.

It shook me, then I saw that everybody had dived off the seats on to the floor. Willie and me were the only two not stretched out horizontal.

From somewhere not far away, the audience came crashing, and a crash of glass and brickwork. I finally caught on. That buzzing had been a doodlebug. No wonder the audience had been restive.

The doodlebug had come to crash very close, and I'd been standing up like a mug while it fell!

The managing director brushed himself off, and clapped me on the shoulder.

"Easy to see how you got the V.C.," Captain Norris declared. "With iron nerves! You stood there without flinching!"

Well, the only reason why I hadn't been biting the carpet was that I hadn't realised what was going on, but I decided not to say so. Just then, a scared-looking chap in overalls came belting into the room.

"That doodlebug fell on Workshop Two!" he yelled. "Some of the shift are trapped inside!"

### STAND-IN HERO.

ME and Willie and the managing director galloped outside, with everybody else pounding after us.

Workshop 2 was a two-storey building not far away, and it was a right mess. Most of the top floor had been blown apart, and a mass of bricks and rubble had fallen through to the ground floor.

"Was anybody working on that second floor?" I gulped.

"No, fortunately," the director informed me. "All the people from there were at your lecture. But the ground-floor department was in production."

We took a closer look. Bricks and rubble had almost blocked the entrance to the ground floor. Squinting up, I could see twisted girders that had once been the floor of the second story. Great heavy lathes and other pieces of machinery were balanced on the girders, ready to come crashing down.

One of the foremen had been calling the roll. He reported to the managing director.

"Most of the workers on the ground floor got out," he stated. "But there are three not accounted for."

"They must be somewhere inside the wreckage," muttered the director. "Somebody will have to go in and take a look."

There was a short pause, and I suddenly discovered that everybody was looking at me. The managing director gazed meaningfully at the V.C. ribbon on my chest.

I was really in it. There was a hero's job to be done, and there I was, all dressed up as a hero, with a medal to prove it! Everybody was waiting for me to spring into action.

Well, what could I do? I pushed my fake tash a bit more firmly into place and started in over the rubble that blocked the doorway.

Squirming through a bit of a gap, I wriggled over a jumble of bricks. Somebody was moaning among the wreckage. Tracking the noise down, I found a chap pinned by a mass of rubble across one leg.

"Take it easy, chum," I told him. "Soon have you out of this lot."

I sweated and struggled until I got his leg free, then I eased him across my back, and crawled to the entrance. Willie had widened the gap, and he was waiting for me. I passed the injured worker out to him.

Willie wanted to come back with me, but I stopped him.

"No, mate," I protested. "This is a one-man job. You wait here."

I went back inside, trying not to think of that machinery balanced on the remains of the floor above. There was another chap lying unconscious by the wreck of his machine. He was a big, fat fellow, and it made me puff to drag him out. That left one more to be accounted for, so back I went.

All around, I could hear creaks and cracking noises coming from the wrecked girders overhead. Sweat was coming out on my forehead as big as marbles. A great chunk of machinery suddenly slid down from above, and made a whacking big dent in the floor not twenty yards away from me.

"If this is what it means to be a hero, you can have it!" I decided.

I scrambled around among

the wreckage on the ground floor. At last I came across the third chap. He was unconscious as well, and it looked as if a brick had bounced off his nut. He was another big bloke, and when I tried to get him over my shoulder, I found I couldn't. Struggling around in the wreckage had made me pretty tired.

I tied his wrists together in front of him with a handkerchief, then I crouched over him on all-fours and lifted his arms round my neck. When I crawled forward, I dragged him along with me.

It rubbed my hands and

knees sore to crawl, and we only moved very slowly.

I plodded on, wondering if I'd ever get the kink out of my neck, then I reached the rubble blocking the entrance. The next thing, Willie's big hands were taking the unconscious man off me, and I was being helped out.

#### KNOCKER SINGS DUMP!

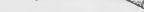
CROWDS of workpeople were cheering loudly. They almost drowned the crashes as the machinery came plunging down in the workshop I'd just left. The managing director pumped my hand up and down.



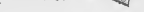
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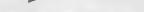
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"Magnificent work, Captain Procter!" he shouted. "I'll see that the Army hears about what you've done today!"

I discovered that the real Captain Procter was listening. He had come back from his walk, expecting to find the lecture safely over.

As soon as he could, Procter drew me on one side.

"I'm going to tell them the truth, Norris!" he wuffed. "I can't take the credit for something you did!"

"Use your loaf, sir, if you'll pardon the expression," I shrugged. "We can't let the Army find out that Private Norris has been going around calling himself Captain Procter."

"I can't let the Army think that it was me who got those casualties out," persisted Procter.

"You'll be doing me a favour if you do, sir," I pointed out. "It's a serious offence to impersonate an officer."

"Oh!" exclaimed Procter. "I hadn't thought of that!"

"And it might make things awkward for you, sir," I declared. "The General might not like you going around as a private."

Well, Procter might have been a hero, but he certainly couldn't use his loaf much. He kept arguing with me, saying that he didn't want to accept any credit for what I had done. At last I convinced him that it would be much better for me if my little impersonation was kept a secret.

"Just leave things alone, sir, and we can finish off this little tour the way we started it," I assured him.

But I was wrong there. As soon as General Bulstrode read a report about our caper at the London factory we were recalled. It seems the General thought civilian life was too risky for a valuable man like Captain Procter.

We changed uniforms again and returned to our unit under our proper names. The General looked a bit surprised to see that Procter had shaved off his moustache, but he gave Procter a big welcome.

"Magnificent job you did in that doodlebug business, Procter!" he declared. "I'm having the details entered in your record."

Procter opened his mouth, and I had to stand on his foot to shut him up. When we got outside I had to talk to him again to convince him that he ought to take the credit.

"It'll look better in your record, sir," I grinned. "A recommendation like that would be out of place in mine. My record looks more like a crime sheet out of 'Police Gazette.' I'd sooner you had the recommendation."

And I meant it, too. I'd had enough of being a hero—that was Procter's job. I was just a geezer who used his loaf.

Next week, Knocker meets his match—a man who can beat him at using his loaf!



The fieldsmen think the last man in will be easy meat—but J.B.Q. has other ideas!



## JAMES B. QUICK

### ONE MAN SHORT.

JAMES B. QUICK, a reporter on the staff of the London "Daily Clarion," paid off the driver of the hansom cab that had brought him from Fleet Street, and walked into Lord's cricket ground. It was a June day in 1872, but it was not the English summer that had given Quick his unburned complexion. He had acquired it on a long journey into Africa, from which he had recently returned. His articles on the slave traffic, and his description of Henry Stanley's meeting with Dr David Livingstone, the famous medical missionary and explorer, had gained even greater prestige and influence for the Clarion.

What was even more important, public opinion had been aroused, and the Government was giving active consideration to measures to be sent out to the East Indian station, to give the Navy more scope to catch the Arab dhows, which carried loads of slaves from Arabia to the slave markets in Arabia.

Quick was looking forward to reporting on the three day cricket match between the M.C.C. and the North, which was starting at Lord's that morning. He particularly hoped to see a long innings by Dr W. G. Grace, the Gloucestershire amateur, who was captaining the M.C.C.

Quick was both a footballer and cricketer and, since his return, he had managed to play in one game for a Middlesex team against Cambridge-shire. He had made 14 runs in one innings and taken a couple of wickets.

Quick, a tall, keen-looking young man with closely-trimmed side-whiskers, was

moving along in front of the pavilion when Mr R. A. Fitz-Gerald, the secretary of the M.C.C., came dashing out.

"You're just the fellow I wanted to see!" he exclaimed. "We're short of a player. Would you like a game?"

"I'd like to play," Quick replied, "but my kit is in a bag at the office."

"Then send for it," retorted Fitz-Gerald. "There's plenty of time. Grace has won the toss, and the M.C.C. are batting first."

At that moment, W. G. Grace walked out of the pavilion with a big, yellow cap stuck on his head. He was a very tall, bearded man, and he looked hard and fit.

Cricket was a very popular game in England, and the name of W. G. Grace was known up and down the land.

Grace had played his first game for Gloucestershire when he was only fourteen, and when he was sixteen scored 170 for the South Wales Club against the Gentlemen of Sussex.

Since those early days he had scored runs galore—2739 in 1871, for instance—and taken many wickets. His personality had a great deal to do with the ever-increasing popularity of cricket in England. He was as keen as mustard, and hated to lose.

"I've completed the team," Dr W. G. Grace announced. "James B. Quick is going to play."

Grace shook hands with his new player.

"You have a good name for a fieldsmen, young feller," he said in his somewhat high-pitched voice. "Can you hold your catches?"

"I've dropped some," smiled Quick.

"Most of them," replied Grace with a grin, "but not many!" Quick went into the pavilion

which had recently been erected. A grandstand provided additional accommodation for spectators, but there was space at the side of the field for coaches and carriages, from which many people liked to watch.

Quick took out his small writing-case, containing pens and a phial of ink, and wrote a note to his editor, Charles Smithson, informing him that he had been asked to play in the match which he had been going to report on.

When the reporter had done this he went out into the road and called a cabman. By chance, he knew the man, whose name was Higgins. Quick gave him the note, and asked him to fetch his bag from the Clarion office.

"Very good, sir. I'll be as quick as I can," promised the cabby.

Since W. G. Grace had written the name of James B. Quick against No. 11 on the batting list, there did not seem to be any great hurry.

### EDITOR'S MESSAGE.

WHEN Quick returned to the pavilion, the North side was following the umpires on to the field. They were captained by A. N. Hornby, of Lancashire, who was as full of gusto for the game as Grace. During the winter months, he was a great huntsman and had broken a couple of ribs in March that year, while following the hounds.

The North had a very strong side, including Tom Emmett and George Ulyett, the Yorkshire all-rounders and William Mycroft, the Derbyshire fast bowler.

Two or three of the older professionals wore bowler hats. Most of the players wore white shirts, with patterns of coloured spots. The most popular boots

were brown and white, with brown straps.

W. G. Grace strode out, pulling on his batting gloves. John Smith, a Surrey amateur, was his partner.

Quick noted that the pitch looked fast and fiery. All four balls of Mycroft's first over rose sharply, and Grace made good use of his height and reach in getting over them. Emmett bowled a good over from the other end, but Smith played each ball cleanly back to the bowler.

Runs came slowly at first, and Grace was very watchful. He had made twelve out of 15 when Mycroft prepared to bowl him another over.

Quick saw Hornby steal across from the slips to fine-leg, just as the bowler was starting his run. It seemed that Grace had eyes in the back of his head!

"I can see what yer doin'," he called out. "I can see what yer doin'."

He kept his bat out of the way of the ball that Mycroft bowled down the leg-side, in the hope of setting up a catch for Hornby.

The spectators laughed, and Grace chuckled explosively at spotting Mycroft's trap. The next ball he swept to leg for the first boundary of the match.

The following over, with the score at 15 for 1, was captained by John Smith in the air, and the ball rapped the batsman's pad. Emmett appealed confidently, and Umpire Pooley held up a hand in token of dismissal.

The turnstiles, which had been insured for the previous year, were clicking briskly as more spectators arrived. The onlookers saw W. G. Grace batting well, but by the time 40 runs were on the telegraph board two more wickets were down.

That was the position when the cabman arrived with Quick's gear.

"I hope I'm in time, sir," he said. "I should have been a bit smarter, but I was told to wait for a letter."

Quick paid off Higgins and gave him a tip. Before going into the pavilion to change, the journalist opened the envelope that had been passed to him. The note he unfolded was written in his editor's scrawling handwriting. It read—

"Dear James—By all means enjoy the cricket. I hope, though I doubt it, that you will get some runs in such exalted company. I understand that play ends for the day at six o'clock, and I trust you will be eager to collect your report."

This brought Quick to the bottom of the first page. He frowned suspiciously. Why should a messenger be coming for his copy? He had intended to go back to the office himself. Fearing the worst, he turned the page over, and read—

"I have received a communication from Mr Frederick Parkes, who states he will return to his home in Edgbury, Birmingham, late this evening after completing his tour of



the Staffordshire and Worcestershire coalfields. He may have news for us upon a burning question.

"Will you, therefore, arrange to catch the 6.30 train to Birmingham, interview Mr Parkinson, and telegraph his statement to us. I am sure it will be of great public interest. Yours, Charles Smithson."

James B. Quick pulled a long face at the task that had been given him. The burning question to which the editor referred, was the price of coal, which had become a most important topic in Britain. Mr Parkinson was one of the country's biggest coal factors. He supplied the Clarion from time to time, with accurate information about the trade.

While appreciating that the matter was both topical and important, Quick wished that the editor had picked on some other member of the staff to go careering away to Birmingham. This unexpected journey meant finishing his report by the close of play, and also that he would be travelling most of the night.

The spectators applauded as W.G. hit another boundary. Quick stuffed the note into his pocket, and went into the pavilion to change.

#### QUICK BATS.

WHEN the players came off the field for lunch, the score was 80 for four wickets,

and Grace had scored 49 of the runs.

The great man was vexed because he had not had time to complete his 50.

"There was time for another over," he grumbled at the umpires, while walking off the field.

"No, sir, not by the new clock," replied Pookey.

W.G. scowled at the big clock that had just been erected on the wall of the tennis court on one side of the ground, whacked his bat against his pad, and raised his cap to acknowledge the applause from the spectators.

With the first ball after the game restarted, W.G. completed his half-century.

Emmett and Ulyett were the bowlers and, though Grace played them confidently and hit very hard at any loose balls, none of the other batsmen settled down and wickets fell regularly.

When the score was 140 for eight, Grace's total was 90, and it became doubtful as to whether he would get his 100.

Platt, the M.C.C.'s fast bowler, who had no great reputation as a batsman, walked out of the professional's dressing-room and made for the wicket.

In the amateurs' dressing-room, Quick put on his pads. He was completing the bucking when he heard a roar and looked through the window.

Platt's middle-stump had

been knocked flat by Emmett, who was very fast at that stage of his career. W.G.'s scowl could be seen from the boundaries.

"Yer bat was nowhere near the ball, Platt," he snapped, as the unfortunate batsman passed him on the way out.

"I didn't see it, sir," said Platt.

W.G. gazed towards the pavilion and sniffed, while Hornyb chuckled.

"I don't think you'll get your hundred today," he said.

"We'll see what sort of stuff this reporter fellow is made of," retorted Grace.

James B. Quick walked briskly towards the middle. He was feeling slightly nervous, but his eyesight was keen and, while at a Tonbridge School, he had been well coached in the art of batsmanship. Grace came to meet him.

"Watch for the ball that pitches on the leg-stump and breaks across, young feller," he said.

Quick nodded. He had heard about Emmett's leg-break.

"There's another thing," rapped Grace. "Run when I shout."

Quick moved on to the crease and took a guard from the umpire. There was a hush round the ground. The spectators were afraid that Grace would soon be back in the pavilion, robbed of his century because nobody had stayed with him.

Emmett tossed the ball from hand to hand, and glowered grimly at the new batsman.

Quick noted the field placings this settled in his stance.

Emmett took a run of moderate length, and, with his shoulders swinging into his delivery, he sent down a fast, straight ball.

Quick played firmly forward, and pulled to meet the ball, who was fielding at mid-off.

"Yes," roared Grace, as he scampered up the pitch.

"No, go back!" shouted Quick, sensing that it would be a risky run.

W.G. whipped round just as Mycroft gathered the ball. He took a couple of strides, then dived for the crease.

A moment later there was a crash of timber as Mycroft's throw hit the stumps. Had he missed there might have been time to complete a run, but the fact remained that it was a risky call, and Quick had done right in sending Grace back.

Emmett came running to the crease and bowled again. Quick swept his bat down fast and played the ball off his leg.

The ball streaked "round the corner" and down the leg-side to the boundary.

Emmett scowled at Quick. Hornyb chortled and told the reporter he must have been born lucky. The spectators laughed. They thought the last man-in had fluked a four.

W.G. shook his head warningly. He believed that Quick had been rash.

Quick played the last ball of the over between the bowler and mid-off. It looked as if there would be two runs in the stroke, and W.G. did not hesitate to run. However, a fieldsmen cut the ball off and, when Grace turned, he saw there was no chance of a second run.

Grace frowned, as he had missed the bowling again. Quick had to face Ulyett, who was a right-arm bowler of fast-medium pace, with the ability to break the ball either way.

After a consultation with Hornyb, Ulyett set a close field to try to trap the "rabbit." Quick was ringed by fieldsmen. It only needed the ball to pop up sharply, take the edge of his bat, and he would be caught. Grace took off his cap and mopped his brow with a large handkerchief.

Ulyett came striding to the crease and bowled a good length ball.

Quick shortened his grip on the bat handle and hooked at the ball. There was a crisp crack as he hit it smack in the middle of the bat. Hornyb and Emmett ducked as the ball whizzed between them and reached the boundary first bounce.

The crowd roared. The defiance being shown by the last man was much to their taste. The fieldsmen moved back a bit!

The next ball broke sharply and Quick was content to play it back to the bowler.

(Continued on page 110.)

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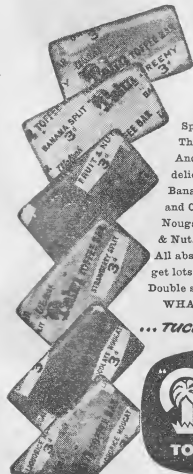
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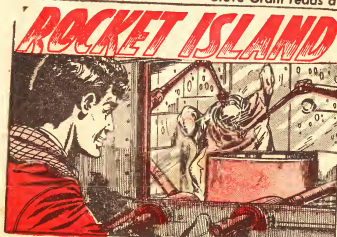
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Steve Grant reads a book on duck shooting—



1—Through a thick glass observation panel, Steve Grant stared into the reactor chamber of the Rocket Research Establishment's atomic stockpile. Steve, a brilliant young rocket designer, had caught a foreign spy hiding inside. Using tongs, operated from the outside, the baffin had been "fishing" for the intruder. When one of the tongs penetrated the man's plastic cocoon, the spy leapt up with a cry of fear. Now he was exposed to the deadly atomic rays!



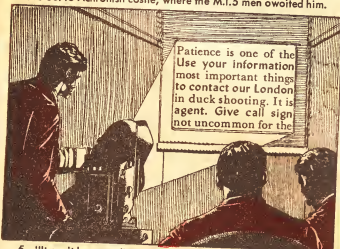
2—Guiding the frightened man by means of the tongs, Steve pushed him towards the compartment's inner door. After opening this door by remote control, the baffin bundled the spy through into a corridor, then pressed the button to close the entrance. Grinning to himself, Steve opened the outer door—and out staggered a familiar figure! "Omar P. Wilberforce!" gossiped the designer. For months now, Wilberforce had been spying on the Research Establishment.



3—Posing as the lord of this little Scottish island of Achronish, the spy had finally discovered that two M.I.5 men were on to him. Licking the men in a shed, Wilberforce had planned to strike a final blow that night—by blowing up the Establishment! Security police, summoned by Steve, took the spy into custody, and everyone settled down to complete their interrupted sleep. Next morning, Steve Grant drove out to Achronish castle, where the M.I.5 men awaited him.



4—The Intelligence agents had managed to batter down the door of their shed prison. Now, with Steve, they hurried through the castle to the spy's operations room. Through an open panel in the wall, a wisp of smoke attracted the men's attention. Wilberforce had set fire to all his documents when he realised the game was up, but, rummaging through the charred pile of papers, Steve found something which had not yet been burnt—a book on duck shooting!



5—"It can't be an ordinary book," reasoned the young designer, "or Wilberforce wouldn't have tried to destroy it!" Later, back at the Research Establishment, Steve's words were proved correct. When the book was placed in a special, infra-red projector, the printing showed up on a silver screen—and something besides. Between the lines of ordinary type, the infra-red beam disclosed a list of names and call signs of foreign agents! The whole spy set-up was exposed.

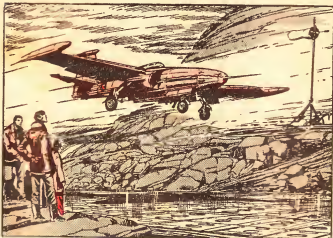


6—Triumphantly, Steve turned to the M.I.5 men. "There's enough evidence here to put Wilberforce and his pals behind bars for a long time," he declared. Acting on the rocket designer's information, a squad of policemen cordoned off a certain embassy in London later that day. Sirens wailing, flying squad cars screeched to a halt at the embassy doors. Armed with a special warrant, Scotland Yard men arrested the caretaker—who was really the chief of the spy ring!

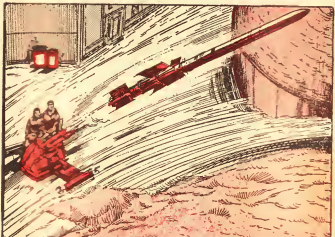
And helps to "bag" a foreign spy ring!



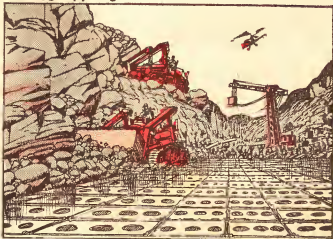
7—In the newspapers next morning, Steve Grant read a full account of what had happened. Besides the caretaker, several other embassy officials had been involved in the spy set-up. All suspects were ordered to leave the country, while the caretaker, Wilberforce, and several other key men remained to stand trial for their crimes. "That's one problem cleared up," Steve reflected. "Now I'll be able to concentrate on being a rocket designer instead of a spy-hunter!"



9—At last, the day came when the airstrip was ready. Steve, amongst others, stood watching anxiously as a jet fighter plane from the mainland roared overhead. Wind was blowing in strong gusts, and the rocks on either side of the airstrip caused swirling air currents which made landing a very tricky business. The pilot was an expert, however, and he brought the aircraft smoothly on to the narrow landing ribbon in a perfect touch-down.



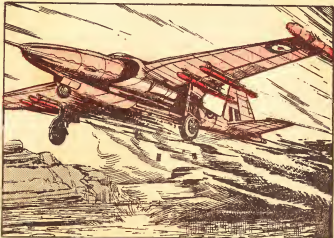
11—Having evolved a basic shape for the rocket, Steve next had a full-size mock-up built. His problem was that, because of the power required, the missile tended to be tail-heavy. By catapulting the model into a large sand pit, the designer was able to correct the weight distribution. Finally the preliminary tests were finished, and several prototype rockets were prepared.



8—Up to this time, Steve had been developing large guided missiles, and ground-to-air rockets which homed on their targets. Now, he turned his attention to a different type of weapon—small rockets which could be carried by a fighter aircraft. The first stage of this project was to prepare an airstrip on the island. Achranish was very rocky, but a squad of workmen, using bulldozers, gradually carved a landing space out of the rocks.



10—Wing-Commander Douglas Grimmond, D.F.C., was the new arrival. A veteran of World War Two, Grimmond had put in more flying hours against the enemy than any other pilot in the country. Soon, he and Steve were deep in discussion. Gradually, between them, the two men worked out the requirements of an air-to-air missile. It had to be launched at a higher speed than the top speed of the aircraft—otherwise the plane might catch it up!



12—Nearly six months since he had first landed on Achranish, Wing-Commander Grimmond climbed into his plane one morning. Slung under the wings were four sleek missiles—the result of months of hard work. To ensure a safe take-off from the short, tricky airstrip, the plane was equipped with special rocket units on the fuselage. Booster units at full power, Grimmond's plane streaked into the air.

The Wingco is in danger next week—because one of the rockets doesn't work!

clear the parapet. It was a tragedy for horse and rider when a rear hoof struck the parapet and dislodged a brick.

Horse and rider recovered their balance after the long drop. Colonel Domecq looked over his shoulder and snapped his fingers with annoyance when he saw the gap in the parapet. It had been a superb attempt.

This convinced many more people that under the circumstances the jump was impossible. There would have been no objections to it if it had been in the middle of the arena, but the organisers were hotly criticised for its positioning by the people sitting near me.

Sam brought Kubal into the ring. The horse swished its tail and seemed impatient to get going, but there was some delay while the parapet was relaid.

As soon as the bell rang, Kubal struck the ground thrice in its usual manner, an action that always amused the spectators, then went for the Parallel Bars. I joined in the shouts as it cleared the jump in grand style.

Up to the Wall they came, and I thought they were far too near at the instant of take-off.

I can best describe Kubal's leap by comparing it with a cat's spring from floor to table. Yeomans, my head groom, and for, with an incredible release of power, the horse seemed to rise nearly vertically. As its fore-hoofs cleared the Wall, its hind legs lashed up. In what

must have seemed to Sam like a high dive, they plunged down.

Kubal's head nearly touched the ground as it landed. The impact its forelegs had to take must have been terrific, but there was no fall. With Sam helping Kubal by maintaining a perfect balance, the horse went on.

The crowd screeched hysterically. An English spectator who knew me by sight grabbed my hand and shook it violently.

Kubal revelled in the applause. Sam loosened the reins and it bowed to the crowd. The important thing was that they had made a wonderful come-back and scraped into the Grand Prix.

The Count and Colonel Domecq returned to the ring to receive their prizes, as they had both tied for the second place.

The president of the French Jumping Federation came into the ring. He tied a blue ribbon on to Kubal's headgear and presented Sam with a gold cigar box. As the owner I would receive a cheque for approximately £100.

## KIDNAPPED!

WHEN the ceremony was over, I made my way into the small collecting ring. Jack Yeomans, my head groom, and a former sergeant in the Wold-shires, looked ready to burst into song.

"I never thought he'd get

over the Wall," he grinned. "It's the greatest jump he's ever made."

The riders jogged out of the arena and dismounted. The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"I haf to eat my words," he said. "But the jump was incredible."

"I thought we were going through the blooming Wall," Sam murmured. "It was like looking up the side of a house."

There was a very good arrangement for accommodating the horses. The stadium was in the middle of Paris and transport was provided to take them to some excellent stabling near the Bois de Boulogne, a spacious park in one of the loops formed by the River Seine.

There was also accommodation there for the grooms. Sam and I were staying at a small hotel not far from the stadium.

We saw Kubal into the travelling box, one of six on a big trailer, and told Yeomans we would be out in good time in the morning for Sam to exercise the horse in the park.

Sam and I then set off to walk to our hotel and made our way into a maze of narrow, cobbled streets, dimly lit by gas lamps.

"Have you got the details for the Grand Prix, Sam?" I asked, for sometimes these were altered in small respects.

"Yes, it will be straight jumping, with time also counting after the second round," replied Sam.

I suggested to Sam that a time of fifty seconds would win. "I'm not so sure," argued Sam.

"If Fusil doesn't start knocking the furniture over, he's capable of getting round in forty-seven or forty-eight seconds."

Fusil was a problem horse. It was owned and ridden by a Frenchman named Jules Barbe and was tremendously fast and spy. It was a moody animal, however. In the Puissance it had jumped badly and had been eliminated in the first barrage. This did not matter a great deal as it had done splendidly in the two earlier competitions and qualified for the big event.

We turned a corner and Sam sniffed appreciatively as we passed a cafe.

"If I stayed in Paris I should soon put on weight," he remarked. "I like their cooking."

I heard a whisper and a scuffle of feet in the alley, then raised my stick as a gang of thugs, five or six of them, rushed out at us. We were in a patch of shadow and it was impossible to see their faces. I could just make out their dark berets as they surged round us.

I struck out and there was a yell as my stick cracked on an attacker's arm, then I received a stunning blow on the back of the head that put me down.

I had a blurred glimpse of Sam being dragged into the alley. I pushed myself into a sitting position and a bright constellation of stars seemed to



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## RULES

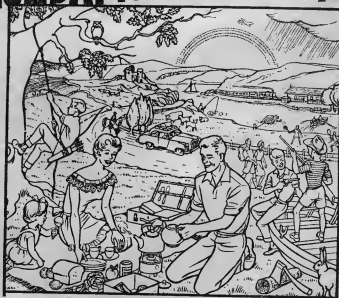
1. Entries must be postmarked not later than May 5th, 1958.

2. You may submit other entries on plain paper but each must be accompanied by the fronts of two packets of any of these Royal products—Pie Filling, Cluffin, Instant Pudding, Dessert or Lapocci Desert.

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4. Judging will be on the basis of objects, the sentence and neatness and age will be taken into consideration. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence can be entered into.

5. A full list of winners can be obtained by enclosing a stamped addressed envelope with your entry.



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NAME

AGE

ADDRESS

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## A dog once saved a cat from drowning.

be spinning round my head.

My impressions for some minutes were foggy, but I vaguely remembered police agents arriving. Apparently I was successful in telling them that Sam had been kidnapped.

I was taken to a doctor's house not far away and, thanks to his treatment, came round fairly quickly. I had received a glancing blow from a cosh. Fortunately my skull was intact and had not been cracked.

I was still at the doctor's when a police inspector named Verriers, a thin man with a wispy moustache, came in to see me.

"Have you got on the trail?" I asked anxiously.

"I have some grave information for you," responded Verriers. "There is no doubt that M'sieur Dent was kidnapped by a gang of crooks and taken underground."

"Underground?" I said thickly.

Verriers told me something about the notorious district of Paris, Passages three or four feet high, with numerous rooms, formed an underground maze. All the recognised entrances were either bricked up or barred with iron gates, but there were many other entrances unknown to the authorities that were used by the criminals and other riff-raff.

"What are you going to do about it?" I demanded.

"We shall pursue our investigations," the Inspector answered, "but I can promise quick results. Can M'sieur offer any suggestions that will assist us in our inquiries?"

I told him that Kubal came from Zongolia and that an evil sect using the sign of "schem" had made numerous attempts to stop the horse from winning.

"So far they've failed," I concluded, "and now it occurs to me that as they've failed to nobble the horse, they've arranged for his rider to be kidnapped. I know it sounds fantastic, but it's the only explanation I can suggest."

"Ah, it's a logical explanation!" exclaimed the Inspector. "Perhaps it is unnecessary to worry too much about M'sieur Dent. The scoundrels will let him go when the competitions are concluded."

"That's no use to me," I protested harshly. "Without Sam Dent I can't jump my horse in the Grand Prix."

"M'sieur is unaware of the extent of the catacombs," Verriers explained. "As I have said, we shall continue with our inquiries, and if we receive definite information we shall act upon it."

"Some hopes!" I muttered.

### ZONGOLIAN AID.

I STOOD near the stables in the morning with a sour taste in my mouth and a lump on my head. Away through the trees I could see horses at an exercise. Yeomans and I were waiting anxiously for some news.

Mike Mason was riding Kubal out for us. He could not, in this event, act as substitute for Sam in the ring. Riders could not be changed, under the rules.

Fusil came trotting back with Jules Barbe in the saddle. The horse was a big, half-bred chestnut which had, when moving slowly, a curious gait known as "dishing." This meant it threw its fore-hoofs out sideways. It was an ungainly action and, at first sight, nobody would have thought Fusil was a jumper of international calibre.

Barbe was a rider of long experience, a thickset, stocky fellow who had the hands and judgement of an expert. He appeared to be in a cheerful mood and laughed when his groom ran to meet them.

"Ah, Fusil is in his jumping mood today!" he exclaimed.

"It has been as much as I can do to hold him in."

I sighted Mike Mason and Kubal. They were coming along well together.

"Thanks for riding him out, Mike," I stated.

"Pleasure," replied Mason.

"There's no news of Sam, I suppose?"

"Not a word," I replied. "I

suppose the police are still pursuing their inquiries."

Mason hurried away as he was going to give Pillerton an airing, and I followed Yeomans and Kubal towards the stables.

There was a shrill call. I looked over my shoulder and halted. Towards me hurried a little, swarthy man wearing a hat like an inverted flower pot, a dark coat, and extremely baggy trousers. He carried an umbrella. This was Mr Ichi Tung, who belonged to the "vit" sect.

"I wish to be informed why a stranger is jockey to Kubal?" he said urgently.

"It's because Sam Dent has been kidnapped," I retorted.

Ichi Tung glared at me.

"When did he go?" he demanded. "Where was he kidnapped? Who was there?"

I told him what had happened.

"The police think he was taken underground, into the catacombs," I added.

"A wasted minute is like a lost pearl," stated Ichi Tung.

"I must depart."

He opened his umbrella, held it over his head, then drew it

down. In that instant he vanished.

I had an aching head and had experienced momentary spells of dizziness since getting up. I did not believe that Ichi Tung could vanish into thin air, but I certainly did not see him go.

### RACE AGAINST TIME.

THE competition that preceded the Grand Prix was nearing its end, the evening when I left the small ring at the side of the stadium and limped out into the street to see if there was any sign of Sam.

It was not a main thoroughfare and cars belonging to spectators were parked on either side. Three or four police officers, with nothing much to do now that the crowd had arrived, were chatting with the gateman. It was the entrance used by competitors only.

I have not seen him yet, M'sieur," said the gateman, who knew why I had come out. "It is a pity."

"The time is so short," I pointed out. "At the best there are only a few minutes left."

Kubal and Sam had gone into the draw, the now unlikely event of the latter turning up they would jump fifth.

"Here comes a taxi," indicated one of the policemen. "Perhaps your friend is arriving."

We watched the vehicle approach. From inside the stadium came a loud burst of applause that indicated the completion of a clear round and possibly the end of the competition. The taxi went straight by.

"No luck," I groaned. "He won't come now—"

"Look!" interrupted the gateman.

Set in the paving stones was a large, round manhole cover and it was at this that the gateman pointed. The cover swung up and dropped open with a clang.

One of the policemen ran into the roadway to hold up an approaching car.

"Sam!" I yelled on seeing his face in the manhole.

Sam placed his hands on the roadway and apparently received a shove from below as he pushed, for he shot up into the open and tumbled over. To be candid he looked as if he had crawled across a farmyard. His riding cap was tossed out of the manhole and dropped near my feet.

"How did you get here?" I gasped.

Sam blinked in the glow of the lamp over the gate.

"I dunno. I've been blindfolded," he snarled. "What's the blooming time?"

The Grand Prix was about to start," I informed him.

"Let's get to it," growled Sam as he scrambled up. The police were staring down the manhole where a flight of stone steps led into murky darkness below, but there was no time to stop and discuss the matter. I followed Sam as

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fast as I could. He thought he had been confined in a cellar, though this was more likely to have been a room in the catacombs.

Sam said he had been given a loaf and a hunk of cheese together with a bottle of wine that tasted worse than vinegar. His release had come suddenly when he had been blindfolded and hustled along underground until his dramatic reappearance in the fresh air.

In the few minutes to spare, Sam had Yeomans clean him up with a hosepipe, and as a result, was glistening when he made his first appearance in the ring on Kubal.

There were twelve jumps and, though speed did not come into it, I placed their faultless round as Sam's greatest feat.

This was because he had not had the opportunity of walking the course beforehand. He had learned the way to go by studying the diagram in the collecting-ring.

After two rounds, only three horses were fault-free—Kubal, Fusil, and Vaqui. Time might decide the issue, though certain of the fences were raised. The order of jumping was Jules Barbe, Sam, and Colonel Domccq.

The crowd gave Barbe and Fusil a tremendous burst of applause when they entered the ring.

The bell rang and away they went. There was no "dishing" by Fusil at speed, and it was not

jumping too high and thereby wasting time.

I glanced at the timing-clock as they were turning after six jumps, and only 24 seconds had been taken.

The crowd gasped when Fusil grazed the big Gate, but it did not fall. It thundered on and cleared the Trough and the small Water Jump. It cleared the Double Oxer, the Rustic Post and Rails and approached the high red Wall.

Up and With spectators screeching, Barbe galloped the horse through the finishing gate and the clock stopped on 48.5 seconds, a tremendously fast time. Barbe flourished his cap confidently to his supporters and

trotted out. Sam brought Kubal in, and, at the bell, had the horse moving before it could beat its hoof on the ground.

Kubal laid its ears back and charged through the gate. It seemed to take the first low fence in its stride and galloped at the Triple Bush. Over it went, then took the Stile.

Kubal was up on its hind legs in the fury of the turn they made. It picked up its stride and made a tremendous leap over the large Water Jump.

I was aware of a strange hush.

Over the Parallel Bars and the Sleepers leapt Kubal. I looked at the time—24 seconds. At halfway it was a tie with Fusil.

In the hush, I heard Sam

shout and Kubal seemed to go faster. It cleared the big Gate then the Trough, went over the small Water Jump, and tackled the Double Oxer.

My horse made a slight stumble on landing, but recovered, took the Rustic Post and Rails, and cleared over it. With and raced through the finishing gate. The big hand of the clock stopped on 48 seconds.

I sat there, too excited to speak. I felt as limp as Sam had looked after he had been hosed down.

There was a general opinion that the pace would be too hot for little Vaqui, and so it proved. It took 50 seconds to complete the course.

Kubal had won the Grand Prix in international company. It was a tremendous triumph.

I received a poke in the back and glanced round. It was Mr Ichi Tung who had jabbed me with his umbrella. He beamed like the full moon.

"This is a truly auspicious occasion," he shrilled.

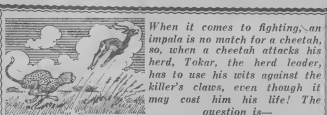
"How did you get Sam away?" I asked.

"It was necessary to offer a ransom of one hundred thousand francs," smiled Mr Ichi Tung.

"That was a lot of money to pay!" I exclaimed.

"The notes were counterfeit," the Zongolian chuckled.

Next Tuesday Warner is given a sinister warning and it comes from a bucket!



# "CAN TOKAR CHEAT THE CHEETAH?"

The answer's in next week's great complete yarn, and that's only one of the treats you'll find in your bumper 24-page "Adventure." There are also another five super stories, two picture-stories in colour, jokes, riddles, sports gear, and chances for YOU to win a SPORTS WATCH, a FOOTBALL, ROLLER SKATES and CASH!

## NEXT WEEK'S "ADVENTURE" IS TOPS!



# SPLASHER SWIMS TO DANGER!

(Continued from page 96.)

loomed up in their path, and Splasher had to make a detour, going dangerously near the ar lamps to avoid it, but a moment later the dark hulls of the E-boats were over his shoulder.

When he felt both their bow's rock to the movement of the sea outside, Splasher knew they were past the village and nearing the river mouth. He realised that his oxygen was going out fast, and that, although the searchlights were directed behind them, the sentries would be alert.

The frogman's head began to pound very uncomfortably, and he was fast as if they were being topped on with heavy boots. He would have to surface soon. His judding brain told him.

## ADMIRABLE ADMIRAL.

FINALLY Splasher no longer had the strength to hold on to his companion, and felt himself rising, rising upwards until at last there was no more

water, and he snapped off his mask and drew gup after gup of air into his aching lungs.

To his amazement, he found that they were almost a quarter of a mile out to sea. The E-boats' searchlights were obligingly lighting up the break-water, making it easy for him to take a bearing on which to swim out to meet the launch.

It was a long, weary swim. It seemed as if Bradshaw had abandoned them, because of the flap ashore, but at long last the black shape of M.L. 542 loomed up out of the darkness. Winded hands reached down from her sides to help them.

As he stood on the deck, talking to Bradshaw, while the M.L. headed back towards the English coast, it seemed to Splasher that there was something familiar about the face and bearing of the tall, dirty, unshaven man who stood beside him, but he was too tired to think about it. When Bradshaw suggested that he could turn in on one of the settee bunks in the wardroom, Morton accepted the offer gratefully.

When he awoke it was almost midnight, and M.L. 542 was tied up alongside at Devonport. Bradshaw was sitting at the wardroom table with his Number One, a Midshipman, drinking coffee. He grinned at Splasher.

"So you've surfaced again, Chief?" he remarked. "Some-one came down with some clothes for your pal, and he's pushed off ashore, but there's

a signal for you. Soupy wants to see you as soon as you're back in the land of the living. I was to shake you at twelve if you hadn't come to by then."

Bradshaw looked at the Midshipman, and they both smiled. Splasher could not see what was so funny, but, then, you could never tell with the R.N.V.R. They had a very peculiar sense of humour.

When he knocked on the door of Captain Richardson's office and entered in response to Soupy's usual quarterdeck bellow, Splasher was rather surprised to see another officer there, standing looking out of the window. Not another job already done by a frogman thought. No bloomin' rest for the poor old diver.

Splasher was even more surprised when the visitor turned round and he saw that the officer was wearing not merely the broad band and three gold rings of an Admiral, but a face which was very familiar—in two ways. It was a face the chief P.O. had often seen in illustrated magazines, and it was the face of the man who had swum out of Le Salin with him last night.

The tall, youthful-looking Admiral flicked his hand to his eyebrows in salute.

"Good morning, Senior Officer," he smiled. "I hope you slept well."

Splasher felt himself flushing brightly.

"Yes, sir," he rapped out. "This is Admiral Lord

Dunraven, Morton." Captain Richardson informed Splasher. "As you ought to know, he's the Chief of Combined Operations."

Dunraven grinned at him—a boyish grin—and Splasher remembered that he was the youngest Admiral in the Navy—the youngest since Nelson. "I was left behind when I went along on a Commando raid which I shouldn't have been on," Dunraven explained. "The raid came unstuck, but I managed to get a message back with a plan for getting me out. I want to thank you for doing the job so efficiently."

"It was a pleasure, sir," Splasher replied.

Dunraven looked at him for a moment, and his mouth twisted in a half-smile.

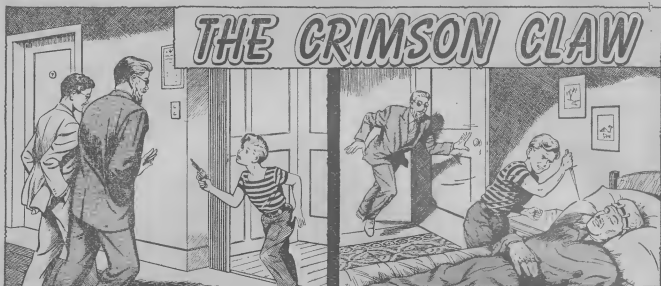
"By the way, Morton," he said casually, "do you have any idea what happened to those E-boats at Le Salin last night? There seemed to be a bit of a flap on."

"I dunno, sir," the Chief P.O. replied innocently. "I think they seemed to have something round their props." "I was as well for us," Dunraven winked. "If they'd gone out and shot up our M.L. it would have been a very long swim home, wouldn't it, Morton?"

"Yes, sir," agreed Splasher happily. "It would!"

Splasher can save a battleship next week—if he can move a 300 lb. time-bomb!

Dixon Hawke is faced with a baffling mystery — when a little boy becomes a deadly assassin!



#### UNDER ARREST.

THE city of Karkh, capital of Jaburia, hummed with the news that Sayed Shabikha, the King's chief adviser, had vanished.

From the palace, there leaked out the information that it was believed that he had been kidnapped by the Brotherhood of the Crimson Claw, the most dreaded secret society in the Middle East.

Only three people knew the truth, that Sayed Shabikha was wandering around somewhere in rags, completely unaware of his identity, having been given a drug which had made him lose his memory. King Mahmud was one of those who knew this, and the others were a pock-marked, blind man who sat begging near the main gate with a younger assistant to hold out the tin cup to passers-by to receive the alms for which he whined.

"Alms for the love of Allah!" was what he cried to everyone who approached, but no one entered or left the palace without being noted by the same "blind" man, who was Dixon Hawke in disguise. Tommy Burke, the famous British detective's young assistant, was his companion.

The beggars' robes was a disguise which had served them well since they had come to Jaburia to investigate the Brotherhood of the Crimson Claw. There were hundreds of beggars like them throughout the city, and Hawke's command of the Jaburian language was so perfect that nobody had ever suspected the truth.

Dixon Hawke was playing a waiting game. He had already uncovered a good deal of the Brotherhood's activities, and had succeeded recently in contacting young King Mahmud, who lived in constant fear of assassination by agents of the Crimson Claw.

It was Hawke who had discovered that Sayed Shabikha was one of the leading members of the Brotherhood, and who had cleverly trapped him and

administered the drug which had caused Shabikha to lose his memory. King Mahmud was aware of this fact, and it was on the British detective's instruction that the young ruler let it be known that he believed the Brotherhood had kidnapped his chief adviser.

Hawke expected that the Brotherhood would send another important member of their organization to take Sayed Shabikha's place, which would bring Hawke a step nearer his objective—to smash the Crimson Claw before the King was assassinated.

The two detectives had been sitting there all day without seeing anything of great interest. There had been the usual coming and going from the palace, and one of the visitors had been Colonel Suliman, the new Chief of Police, who was also a member of the Brotherhood. Hawke was glad that he had been able to warn King Mahmud not to trust the Colonel.

"Where do you think Shabikha is now?" Tommy Burke asked his guy'nor.

"I have not the faintest idea," Hawke shrugged. "But one thing is certain, he will have no knowledge of his identity, and in those rags which we left him he will be taken for a beggar. He may still be in the city, or he may have wandered down-river to one of the villages. I do not care what happens to him so long as he is out of the way for a few weeks. What is happening down the road?"

He had become aware that there was a considerable disturbance taking place about a hundred yards distant. A crowd had collected, and uniformed police could be glimpsed. Several police vans had drawn up and people were shouting.

Dixon Hawke dared not stare in that direction for it would have betrayed the fact that he was not blind, but Tommy did so.

"The police seem to be arresting several men," he murmured. "The crowd's too

thick to let me see clearly, but there's a lot of movement. Now one of the vans is coming this way. There are half a dozen policemen riding on the sides." As he spoke, one of the police vans sped down the road and stopped with a screeching of brakes right beside them. Two of the police jumped down and roughly grabbed Tommy and Hawke, threatening them with their clubs.

"You're begging!" they accused. "All beggars are to be arrested by order of the Chief of Police. Come along, and make no trouble."

Another constable opened the back of the van, and Hawke and Tommy were tossed inside. They discovered that there were already half a dozen ragged figures in there and they were wailing and protesting at the top of their voices. The door was again slammed, and the van moved on.

The van collected three more beggars, then returned to police headquarters. So many arrests had been made by other patrols that the prisoners were being crowded into what had formerly been the stables.

By the time darkness fell, nearly 200 poor wretches, many of them crippled or diseased, had been packed into the stables.

Before locking the door for the night, a junior police officer shouted—

"Let us have no noise, or we'll turn the hose-pipes on you! In the morning you'll be examined one by one, and those who come from other parts of the country will be sent out of the city."

There were howls of protest as they were shut up in total darkness. Dixon Hawke gripped Tommy's arm and pulled him close to the door.

"We have got to get out of here tonight!" he whispered. "Any such inspection as the officer mentioned would betray us. We'll wait a while, then I'll use my lock-picks."

Tommy Burke sighed with relief. He had feared that Hawke had not brought those

small but effective instruments with him when he had dressed as a beggar that morning.

Hawke waited half an hour, then went to work. While Tommy Burke struggled to give him sufficient space, fending off those who would have crushed them to the door, Hawke worked on the lock with his instruments. Two minutes sufficed, and the door suddenly swung outwards.

The ace detective grabbed Tommy Burke just in time to prevent them from being swept away by the horde which rushed screaming from the stable.

#### NEWS OF NUMBER TWO.

SO sudden was the escape that the police guards outside were taken by surprise. They were bowled over by the beggars as the wretches poured into the courtyard, and trampled underfoot.

From within the building came the sound of an alarm bell. The police barracks were alongside, and Hawke knew that, in a few minutes, scores of constables would be turned out. He kept hold of Tommy's arm and pulled him into a far corner of the courtyard where stood a line of garbage bins. "We'll wait here," he muttered.

They saw the beggars escape into the road outside, then watched policemen rushing out of the barracks, buttoning their tunics and buckling their revolver belts around them.

Police cars were manned. Whistles blew and orders were given and later continued. There was all the confusion that Hawke had anticipated, and all the time Tommy and he remained quietly in their corner. No one thought to search the courtyard. It was taken for granted that the escaped prisoners would run out as soon as possible.

But the big gates to the street were closed and locked, and the guard on them was doubled. It was a clear case of locking the stable door after the horse had gone, but it meant extra trouble for Hawke,



He saw that it would not be easy for them to escape now.

Close beside them a door to the police headquarters had been left open, and light streamed from it. The hidden pair could see that there was a passage inside, and that it led to the front door of the building. Here was an alternative way of escape. When things quietened down outside, it might be possible to slip through there and out of the front entrance.

Hawke and Tommy tiptoed to the open door and looked inside. There appeared to be no police left in the building. The pair entered cautiously, and silently headed down the passage towards the further door.

As they did so, they heard someone speaking on a telephone in one of the rooms. Hawke heard the words—

... have found no trace of Number Two! It is a complete mystery. Apparently he went out of the palace late last night, and did not return until well after midnight, when he saw the King."

Dixon Hawke whispered to Tommy Burke to keep watch, and moved nearer to a door which was open a few inches. It was inside this room that someone was discussing the disappearance of Sayed Shibakha. Hawke managed to see round the door, and was not surprised to find the man using the name was Colonel Suliman, the police chief.

"... Yes, yes, I understand," Suliman continued. At the moment I have my hands full."

Dixon Hawke could see that Colonel Suliman was scared of the man at the other end. Beads of perspiration were on his forehead, and he kept wiping them away with his handkerchief.

"Yes, of course, Number Two," he was now saying. "It was unfortunate that Zor was seen a little too soon. But for that, our troubles would have been over by now, and the King would be dead. Yes, yes, I did my best. The police guards looked the other way. It was one of the Palace Guards who spotted him!"

Hawke knew that Suliman and the man at the other end were discussing Zor's attempt to enter the King's apartment the previous night. Hawke had been there at the time, and would have seized the dwarf assassin if he had entered, but the alarm was raised before that could happen, and Zor had fled.

"I understand perfectly," Colonel Suliman was nodding as he spoke. "You will arrive on the eleven a.m. plane and will be proceeding straight to the Hotel Mecca. I will contact you there."

Slowly he replaced the receiver, then reached for a bell-push. Evidently there was still someone else on the premises. Dixon Hawke turned swiftly and nodded towards the front door. Tommy and he were outside on the steps, before a police orderly came down the

passage in reply to the Colonel's summons. They moved swiftly into the shadows, and watched the back of the constable on duty at the gate ahead.

Hawke's quick brain was aware that the had just overheard the first thing was to get away from police headquarters and to avoid the scores of police who were out seeking the escaped beggars.

Shouting down the road told them that one of the runaways was being brought back. He was hurrying, and two constables were having trouble in frog-marching him along. As he neared the police building

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he almost broke free. The sentry at the gate ran to aid his comrades and Hawke seized his opportunity. Tommy and he slipped out unobserved, and dodged into the garden of a big, white building, one of the many mansions in Karkh. This was the Hotel Mecca.

"Someone whom Suliman called Number Two is arriving in Karkh in the morning on the eleven o'clock plane," murmured the detective. "He is going to stay in this hotel and Suliman is going to contact him here. I think we should try to be in the hotel ourselves."

Tommy Burke looked down at his rags and his bare feet. "No, not like this!" agreed Dixon Hawke. "We shall have to change our disguises, and I can't say that I shall be sorry. One can have too much of beggars' company!"

They waited until the hour before dawn, by which time the hunt for the escaped beggars had been called off for the night, and they made their way back to their quarters in the old part of the city.

**THEIR SUSPECT.**

DIXON HAWKE was well aware that he was taking a risk by becoming a European again.

It would have been unwise to have become British or American visitors, and when Hawke and Tommy arrived at the Hotel Mecca early the following morning, they registered as Monsieur Dupont, a French merchant, and Jules Suchard, his young secretary. They took care to reach the hotel shortly after the morning plane from Syria had arrived, and it was taken for granted at the hotel that they had come on that plane.

Monsieur Dupont was an elderly man with a full beard and thick-lensed tinted glasses.

His secretary was olive-skinned, had a small moustache, and likewise wore glasses. They said that their heavy baggage was following them by motor transport.

Rooms were found for them on the third floor, and by 11.30 they were down in the entrance hall to see the arrival of those who had come in on the plane from Bagdad.

More than a dozen passengers from this plane came to the hotel, and about half of them were Europeans. The others were Arabs of distinguished appearance, some Iraqis and two Jaburians.

Hawke and Tommy had taken up a position close enough to the reception desk for them to hear the particulars of the new arrivals. Between them they memorised the names and room numbers of each man, and, as soon as possible afterwards, retired to the writing-room and noted down these facts.

Dixon Hawke looked over the list.

"There is nothing here to tell us which is our man, but it is certain that one of them is the second in command of the Brotherhood. If we can discover who he is we shall have taken an important step forward."

"I vote for the Sheikh Ben Hali, the one with all the big diamond rings," stated Tommy Burke. "He's got a couple of servants with him who look real thugs."

"I'm afraid we can't go by that," murmured Hawke, "although we'll keep our eyes on him. The man we seek is to be contacted by the Colonel Suliman, and he will almost certainly try to contact King Mahmud. The disappearance of Sayed Shibakha will leave the Brotherhood with no one of importance in the palace. They will want to introduce someone else in his place. That is when we should be able to pick out our man."

"Well, I still vote for the Sheikh," declared Tommy, stubbornly, "and he has a suite of apartments. He should be easy to hear if he makes any phone calls to Suliman or the palace."

Dixon Hawke knew what his assistant meant. They had with them one of the latest American appliances for tapping telephone conversations. It was small in size, no larger than a packet of cigarettes, but so delicate that by driving a pin into a partition wall it was possible to hear every word spoken on a phone in the room beyond. Such appliances were little used by the British police, but in the United States they were much favoured by G-men and other Federal investigators. It was from a Federal agent that Hawke had obtained the apparatus.

"Well, we may as well make sure about your Sheikh," he told Tommy. "If he is going to phone from his room he will probably do it soon. We'll listen in."

They went up to their room

and Tommy quickly knocked the long, thin steel pin into the wall that divided them from the Sheikh's suite. One quick blow with the butt of an automatic was all that was required to do this, and connections were soon made. Hawke sat down with the tiny receiver to his ear. Tommy Burke went downstairs to report if any of the new arrivals left the hotel, and under what circumstances.

Dixon Hawke had not been listening-in for five minutes when the phone in the Sheikh's suite was picked up and someone snapped—

"Get me the Chief of Police for the Sheikh Ben Hali!"

Hawke tensed. This seemed almost too good to be true! The connection was made, and a most respectful voice at the other end murmured—

"This is Colonel Suliman, Chief of Police, very much at your service, Sheikh Ben Hali!"

"Colonel Suliman," Hali arrived in your city without giving preliminary notice of my coming, and I have my reasons for so doing!" stated the Sheikh, curtly. "I shall be having an audience with King Mahmud shortly, and I want you to arrange for police protection for me both to and from the palace. I shall also want police protection while I am at this hotel."

"But, excellency, Sheikh Ben Hali!" cried the Colonel. "I had no idea you were arriving in Karkh, or I would have had you met at the airport. I will call on you myself and make the necessary arrangements."

"Do this," snapped the Sheikh. "I shall be resting until one o'clock. You may call then. Suite seventeen."

He rang off abruptly, and Dixon Hawke drummed on the back of a chair with his strong fingers as he stared at the blank wall. Did this conversation with Colonel Suliman mean what the ace detective thought it did?

**ZOR STRIKES!**

HAWKE was pondering over the matter when Tommy returned—and gasped out excitedly—

"I've been hearing more about the Sheikh next door, Guv'nor! He's some kind of distant cousin of King Mahmud. Apparently he quarrelled with the King's wife, and he's been living in Bagdad ever since. This is the first time he's been in Karkh for a very long time."

"Well, it may interest you to know that he has already rung Suliman and has not his comings round here at one o'clock to discuss police protection when he goes to the palace," Hawke told him.

"Then he's our man!" Tommy's eyes glistened with satisfaction.

"I'm not so sure!" exclaimed Hawke. "Suliman not only sounded surprised to hear that the Sheikh was here in Karkh, but somewhat startled. I only wish we could overhear what passes between

## A parachutist fell 22,965 feet in 143 seconds.

them when Suliman calls, but this gadget only picks up phone conversations. Anything else of interest?"

"One of the passengers who came on that Bagdad plane is complaining that his pocket was picked at the airport. He's the American with the horn-rimmed spectacles—Mortimer B. Wilcox. He has gone straight to police headquarters in a taxi, and he says that if his wallet isn't returned to him he'll go to the American Embassy."

Hawke nodded. He was still thinking about Sheikh Ben Hali. It wanted more than an hour to the time when the Chief of Police would be arriving, so there was time to go downstairs and find out more about the rest of the newcomers.

The detective noted that one of the Sheikh's servants was standing outside the door of his suite, as though on guard. He had an ugly-looking dagger in his belt, and he flashed a suspicious glance at Hawke as the detective and Tommy passed.

"If the Sheikh is Number Two, I can't understand why he needs to take such precautions," muttered Hawke. "The only assassins in the city belong to the Brotherhood."

The lift was on its way up,

and when it arrived they stood aside to let the sole occupant step out. He was a boy of about ten, gaudily dressed in American style. There were several American families in the hotel, and the two Britishers thought that the child belonged to one of them. The little lad had a gun in his hand, and as he brushed against Tommy, he pointed this and shouted, "Bang!"

Tommy grinned. Hawke closed the gates and pressed the button for the lift to descend, and the boy went along the corridor which the detectives had just crossed. The lift was less than halfway down when Dixon Hawke gave a stifled cry and pressed the emergency button which brought the lift to an instant stop. Then, as the button to send them back to the third floor.

"That boy—I've seen his face before!" he snapped, and when the lift arrived at the third floor he jerked back the gates and rushed out before Tommy could open his mouth to ask what was wrong.

Straight down the corridor towards their own room Hawke ran, and, without knowing why, Tommy went after him. They turned a right-angled corner,

and the first thing they saw was the tall Arab guard outside the Sheikh's suite. He was no longer standing against the wall, but lay on the floor in a huddled heap.

The door behind him was open.

"That boy—the dwarf—Zor!" gasped Hawke, and plunged through the open doorway.

They found themselves in a room where a phone stood on an ebony table. There were two other doors, and one of these was partially open. Hawke leapt towards this. The room beyond was a bedchamber.

Hawke saw the bed, with the bulky form of Sheikh Ben Hali lying on it without covering. The Sheikh had discarded his heavy outer robe.

Standing beside the bed was the little American "boy", with a narrow-bladed dagger in his hand. He had turned. Hawke arrived on the threshold, and his teeth showed between parted lips—teeth far too yellow for a boy of his apparent age.

Their eyes met for a moment, and Hawke saw that the other's were old, wise eyes of a grown man who had looked upon death in many forms. The boy was Zor, and he had come there with the intention of

killing Sheikh Ben Hali. The guard outside had taken him for a child, and had not lived to discover his mistake. The killer dwarf grunted and as quick as a flash raised the dagger to plunge it into the sleeper.

The detective whipped out his gun.

Crack! Dixon Hawke's automatic was fitted with a silencer, and the report was so muffled that this did not affect the accuracy of his shooting. The dwarf gave a strangled cry of rage and fear as the dagger was knocked from his grasp. Then, as quick as sight, he ducked to the floor and dived under the bed.

Thinking that Zor might have a gun, Hawke moved to the side of the doorway. The bed creaked as the Sheikh awakened with a start, crying out to know what was wrong.

Dixon Hawke now knew that, no matter what the Sheikh's business was with King Mahmud, he was not Number Two, otherwise the Brotherhood of the Crimson Claw would not have sent their ace assassin to kill Ben Hali so soon after his arrival in Karkh.

Next week, Hawke discovers the secret behind the Brotherhood of the Crimson Claw!

beamed at Quick.

"That foxed him," he chuckled, with a glance at Ulyett. "We tricked him out."

Quick tossed the ball in, then he took the chance of bringing his report up to date. He fetched paper and pencil out of his pocket, and sat on the grass while doing his writing.

With the next batsman in, the rate of scoring slowed down. Hornby was anxious to end the day without losing another wicket and in this, despite all the wiles of Grace, he was successful. The score was 50 for one, when time was called, and the umpires removed the bails.

Quick made a dash for the dressing-room, finished his report, and handed it to the waiting messenger. He had a quick wash and dressed hurriedly.

"You're in a tearin' hurry, James," remarked Grace who, far from having enough cricket, was going out presently for some batting practice.

"I've got to go to Birmingham," said Quick.

"What?" roared Grace. "What's takin' you to Birmingham?"

"It's a newspaper job," Quick answered. "I shall be here."

"That's all very well, but when are you going to get yer sleep?" demanded Grace fiercely. "You'll be no good tomorrow if you're half-dead in the field."

Next week, J. B. Q. stops a serious accident—by looking out of a train window!



**JAMES B. QUICK**

(Continued from page 101.)

The last ball of the over was tossed up by Ulyett. Quick realised he was being tempted to score; the North wanted him down at the other end.

Quick played the ball firmly towards Emmett. The fieldsman pretended to let it run past, inviting Quick to go for a run, but the reporter stayed where he was.

The spectators applauded. Grace had the bowling again. He came down the pitch and smiled at Quick.

"I thought you were no more than a pen-pusher, but you can handle a bat," he said. "We'll take the runs as they come."

Quick accepted the last remark as a compliment to his batting, and grinned cheerfully. It meant that W.G. relied on him to keep his end up.

He had not added to his total when Grace rattled along to his century. The applause was long and loud. The spectators had not been disappointed.

However, the total was only 169 and runs were still needed against the North's strong batting side.

Grace played his powerful shots all round the wicket, and Quick began to score again.

When the total had risen to 180, Hornby decided it was time to change the bowling.

Mycroft and a left-arm fast bowler named Pate shared the attack.

Grace took four runs off Mycroft, then Quick had to face Pate. The left-hander slung down a very fast ball that swung viciously towards the batsman's legs.

Quick made a swift lunge with his bat. It was as much in self-defence as anything else, but he deflected the ball and it streaked to the long-leg boundary, bringing his total up to 24.

The next delivery was over-pitched, and Quick realised in an instant that he could get to it full toss. He moved boldly out of the crease and hit the ball on the volley with a full sweep of his arms.

As the ball soared, members sitting in front of the pavilion started to scatter. The ball dropped among them, only just missing a window.

The six gave Quick a thrill. He had never expected to hit one at Lord's in a first-class match. The spectators gave a tremendous cheer.

Pate soon had his revenge. The last ball of his over was a real stunner. It pitched on the off-stump, kept unusually low, cut across and knocked back the leg-stump.

The total was 198, and Quick had made 30 of the runs. Grace was not out, with 114 to his credit.

### WONDER CATCH.

HORNBY and Ulyett opened the batting for the North.

# LANKY'S SPOT FOR SPORTS



Practical jokes are the subject of this week's natter, lads. If you've been April fooled today, don't take it too much to heart, because you won't have been the only one. Perhaps you'd like to hear some stories of sportsmen who also like a joke. Stand by, then, for a few funny tales of the ...

## IT'S A FACT!

Martin Dabrille, an Australian, swam clubs continuously for 5 DAYS 17 HOURS!

G. Bradford, of Bristol Rovers and England, has played in EVERY POSITION EXCEPT GOAL!

When Vic Towse was an amateur boxer, out of 163 fights, HE WON 161!

Brian Close played cricket for England AT THE AGE OF 18!

## ARTFUL ATHLETES

THE city of Florence, in Italy, was full of excitement one day in 1881. The famous Channel swimmer, Captain Webb, was coming to give a demonstration of swimming on the following day. Captain Webb, accompanied by a fellow countryman, arrived and was warmly welcomed.

The next day, at noon, Captain Webb was seen in a rowing boat which was rowed into the middle of the River Arno. Crowds of spectators watched while the figure in the swimming costume slipped into the water, then the boat moved quickly away.

For a long time the crowds waited, expecting Captain Webb to surface and give a demonstration of swimming. But the figure in the swimming costume had vanished—and so had the rowing boat!

Puzzled by this mystery, a few of the spectators hurried down to the lower reaches of the river. There, floating along with the current, they saw a straw-stuffed dummy wearing a swimming costume. It was only then that one of the onlookers realised what date it was. Yes, you've guessed it—April the first!

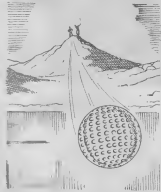
A practical joke earned a Texas sportsman, named Titanic Thompson, five thousand dollars. He bet a New York gambler that he could drive a golf ball five hundred yards. As the world record for a drive is four hundred and forty-five yards, the New Yorker had no hesitation in taking the bet. Thompson did not say where the drive was to be made, however.

The crafty Texan tied up on a hillside overlooking a frozen lake and hit the ball hard on to the icy surface. Away bounced

the ball into the distance, and did not stop until it had covered more than six hundred yards!

On the twenty-first of March, 1956, a rugby match was due to be played between Guy's and St. Mary's hospitals. The game was a Hospital Rugby Cup final, and, on the day before the very important match, the Richmond officials received a phone message. A very pompous voice stated that Her Highness Princess Christina of Schleswig-Holstein wished very much to see the game.

The officials sent an invitation to the Princess, and made



preparations for her arrival. Special seats were roped off for the royal party and the officials began to prepare speeches of welcome.

When the royal visitors arrived the next day, they insisted on sitting in the committee box, as the seats which had been specially prepared were condemned as being unsuitable. It was not until after the game that the officials discovered that the visiting "blue-bloods" had been three Guy's Hospital students and two of their relatives!

## SPORTSMAN OF THE WEEK

Two lads from Sunderland, Co. Durham, fill this part of my page today. Neil Wright is my choice for this week's "Sportsman of the Week," and here to tell you about his chum's sporting successes is his publicity expert, J. U. Burnham. This is what Reporter Burnham has to say about Neil.



"Although Neil is only sixteen, he is outstanding in tennis, table-tennis, football and basketball.

"In tennis he won the Co. Durham under-16 championship in both singles and doubles. He was also runner-up in the under-18 doubles championship of Durham County and the under-18 singles championship of Northumberland.

"He regularly represents the town as a junior at table-tennis and is singles champion of the Y.O.C. League, Sunderland. Recently he won, with two friends of his, the Northumberland and Durham junior "team of three" championship without conceding a set.

"Neil was the under-15 football captain of the school, and he played for Sunderland Boys. He now plays in the school senior team and is signed as an amateur for Sunderland A.F.C.

"In basketball he played for both the school and town under-15 teams."

That's a record of sporting successes to be proud of, Neil, and, as a reward, I am sending you and your reporter pal J. U. Burnham, a brand new SPORTS WATCH! 4 Kingsley Street, Sunderland, is the address on Neil's package, while the other will soon be on its way to Reporter Burnham at 49 Toward Road, Sunderland. Are there any other sports reporters among you readers? If so, here's what to do. Write out an account of the sporting successes

of a pal of yours, enclose his photo, ask your teacher to countersign your report, and send the lot off to this address—

"Lanky's Spot For Sports,"

"ADVENTURE,"

12 Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, London E.C.4.

Remember, lads, both you and your chum win super SPORTS WATCHES if your report appears on this page!

## SPORTY STAMPS.



GUATEMALA

We're taking a trip by air to Guatemala this week, lads, because today's stamp is an air-mail stickerback! Pole-vaulting is the sport pictured on this four-cent issue, and its colours are black and orange-brown. It was issued in 1950 to mark the Sixth Central American and Caribbean Games. Six stamps go to make up this sporting issue, the other sports depicted being football, running, diving and tennis. The fifth stamp shows a picture of a sports stadium.

## ODD-SPORTS

Graham Dixon, of 85 Reginald Street, Pilsmoor, Sheffield, is the first MATCH FOOTBALL winner in my new ODD-SPORTS competition. "Knur and Spell" is the game he described, and here's what he has to say about this Yorkshire game—



"The 'knur' is the ball, made of wood or porcelain, and the 'spell' is the name of the spring trap which throws the knur into the air when a trigger is pressed. The player must then hit the knur with a long club called a 'pommet'.



"This process is then repeated on the spot where the knur lands. The game is played over a set distance, by two players, and the one who completes the course in the least number of strikes is the winner."

Write out a report of the unusual sport played in your district, ask your teacher to countersign your letter and send it to the address under the "Sportsman of the Week" feature on this page. If your report is printed, you win a MATCH FOOTBALL!



5—Max Bergman, the Barham left-back, lumbered into position between Jinky and his target. Bergman's thirteen stone moved slowly, or seemed to, but his sense of timing for a tackle was first class. Jinky weaved towards the back, tapping the ball from one foot to the other. Bergman watched closely. Suddenly, Jinky started waving his arms and pointing in different directions. For an instant, Bergman's attention switched to Jinky's whirling, blue gloves, then his eyes darted back to the ball—but it was gone!



7—Time after time, a goal seemed certain, but was saved at the last second. Barham crowded Lanky's goal, the Rovers burst away, but back came the Boro' men to blaze in shots from long range. A Rover attack in the centre failed, then the Redstoke left-wing pair were stopped on the goal-line by Evans. The crowd's cheers roared louder as, with only seven minutes left, Keening, the Boro' centre, barged through on his own. Lanky strode out from his goal—then slipped on the greasy turf!



9—To the Redstoke people, it seemed a pity that Lanky had given away the penalty. The 'keeper had always inspired the team, and his tricks, like making Jinky use brightly coloured gloves to baffle an opponent, had often won a match. Now the Rovers' fans were sure that the match was lost. Only one man was certain that Keening would not score from the spot — Lanky Hutton. Keening slammed the ball low and to the left, but Lanky was there to meet it with a tremendous punch.

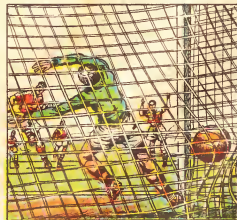
Lanky fails to save a goal next week—because he saved an airman's life!



6—In a flash, Jinky had tapped the ball sideways, then skipped round the back. Bergman desperately poked out his foot, but he was too late. Jinky steadied himself before unleashing a net-bursting drive that whistled just inside Evans' right-hand post. That goal levelled the scores at two all, and, for the next half-hour, the fans were treated to a display of fantastic football. The radio commentators and newspaper men grew hoarse as they tried to describe the fast-and-furious, end-to-end play.



8—A tremendous gasp went up from the fans, for Keening was bound to score now. Lanky realised this, too, and, as the Boro' centre raced past him, the young goalie, in a desperate bid to save the goal, grabbed Keening round the knees. The forward crashed to the ground even as Mr Tate, giving a long blast on his whistle, ran up to the penalty spot. None of the Rovers appealed against the decision, and, all round the ground, the fans fell silent. It was up to Lanky to save the goal—if he could!



10—The fans cheered the wonder save, but Lanky just grinned—his study of the shooting styles of the Barham team had paid off. He had risked punching the ball only to give the Rovers a chance to score, and now, Alf Watney collected the high-soaring clearance and sped the ball on to Sammy Shand, the Rovers' tearaway centre. Sammy closed in on Evans and gave the Boro' 'keeper no chance with a sizzling shot. The whistle for full-time sounded soon after. The Rovers were in the Cup Final!

Kubal must jump the Wall to win the competition—but experts say the jump is impossible!

# KUBAL THE GREAT

## LAST CHANCE.

A MONTH after Kubal's victory at Broadsworth, came a night I shall never forget—a night that was spent in Paris.

My heart was thumping as I sat in the Vel d'Hiv Stadium, watching the preparations that were being made for another barrage in the Puissance competition.

In a Puissance, as the competition went on, the fences were reduced in number but made higher and higher.

This is Captain Hugh Warner, Kubal's owner, speaking. It was when I was serving in Zongolia with the Woldshire Regiment that I had found Kubal. The horse was kept with my battalion, then, during an air-raid, I was wounded in the left leg and had to be sent home to be demobbed. I little thought at that time that I should ever be seeing Kubal again.

Back in England, however, a strange occurrence led to my finding Kubal again. I bought the horse and, being impressed by its remarkable qualities, had trained it as a show jumper. In the show-ring, Kubal had achieved great success. It had reached a Class "A" standard and had won the Individual Championship at the Three Day Trials at Broadsworth.

Many mysterious incidents had been happening, because Kubal appeared to be the focal point of a feud between two rival Zongolian sects. One was "vit," which had good intentions towards the horse; and the other "schem," which had actually made attempts to kill the animal.

In spite of a good deal of contrary advice, I had entered Kubal for the famous Grand Prix, an event which attracted the leading horses and riders in international show jumping. Only twelve horses were allowed to jump in the Grand Prix, and they were selected by their placings in three preliminary competitions.

In the first two competitions, Kubal had not displayed anything like the form we had anticipated. The horse had seemed listless and uninterested. The result was that it had a very low placing and would have to win the Puissance to go forward into the Grand Prix next day. Therefore, it was no wonder I felt anxious as I watched the three huge jumps being prepared.

In the earlier barrages, Kubal had looked much more its usual, sprightly self. Now, of the eighteen starters, only four horses and riders had not been eliminated.

In addition to Kubal and Sam Dent, there was another British pair in Pillerton, ridden by Mike Mason. They had already done well enough to qualify for the Grand Prix.



Colonel Domecq, on Vaqui, represented Mexico, and Count Wettin, on Axel, was from Sweden.

The first jump was a massive Wall with a Bar beyond it to widen the spread. This was followed by a set of Parallel Bars. The last fence was a straight Wall with no marked ground line to give horse and rider a cue for the take-off. These jumps were at 6 ft. 6 in.

At last, the soldiers who were acting as ring attendants finished their job and it was announced that the Puissance would be recommenced.

Count Wettin, a little, wiry man with a big, dark moustache, rode into the ring on his brown, seven-year-old jumper.

The bell rang and the Count passed through the starting gate, picking up speed swiftly to gain the impetus essential to clear the high jumps.

The crowd yelled as Axel soared over the Wall and Bar, sped on and managed to clear the wide spread of the Parallel Bars.

The Count took every inch of space possible, nearly brushing the barrier on the turn before tackling the straight Wall. Up they went, and the din was terrific as Axel cleared the Wall.

Colonel Domecq, a tall, supple, swarthy man was next

to enter the ring. It was not surprising that the Mexicans were always to the fore in international jumping, for their preparations were very thorough.

Vaqui, of no particular breed, was a wiry, little horse with an incredible jump. Like all Mexican horses, it was schooled to be extremely obedient.

There was no mistake by this pair. The only incident was that the Colonel's cap fell off after clearing the last jump.

My horse, Kubal, trotted into the ring. Its ears were pricked and it looked eager. Kubal was a big animal with a small head and a very wide forehead. Its colour, which was drab, had been likened to mud, although I preferred to call it mustard.

Sam Dent, who was often regarded as irresponsible, except when riding, was having quite a job to hold Kubal in. The signs were good, but the jumps were very high.

## FLYING HORSES.

WHEN the bell rang, Kubal struck the ground three times with a fore-hoof. Sam went hard at the Wall and Bar, and I held my breath. Up they rose and I had a horrible feeling that Kubal did not know there was a Bar behind

the Wall, and was jumping too short. Its hind hoofs kicked up, however, and missed the Bar. In a cloud of peat dust it landed and pounded towards the second fence.

Over the thick, white poles sprang Kubal. I thought Sam might have taken a bit more ground on the turn before going for the straight Wall. My worry was unfounded, however, because Kubal thundered at it and took off. Over the top passed my horse and we were not out of the Grand Prix yet.

Sam knew where I was sitting and turned a thumb up confidently as he went by on his way out of the ring.

Pillerton made an error, as almost its first of the week, by clipping the Bar behind the Wall and fetching it down. Mike Mason accepted his bad luck with a philosophic shrug. As I have said, he had already done well enough to compete in the Grand Prix.

There then came an announcement that the jumps would be reduced to two and raised to 6 ft. 10 in. Music from the loudspeakers began and the attendants started the task of taking down the Wall and Bar and raising the other jumps.

The Parallel Bars became a really formidable obstacle, for the spread was already 6 ft. 6 in. That was not increased, but it was a long carry when a horse was already almost seven feet off the ground.

We saw Count Wettin enter the ring again. He received the signal to go and went helter skelter for the Parallel Bars. Axel jumped superbly, and the crowd screamed madly as it skimmed over.

The Count swung into the turn. He almost seemed to try to throw the horse over the straight Wall, but the height was too much for Axel and it kicked a brick down.

On his way out the Count reined-up. His eyes had an indignant glare as he addressed me over the barrier.

"We must join in a protest," he stormed. "Nobody will jump over the Wall. The run is much shorter. There is not the space to work up the necessary speed."

"We must see what the others make of it," I replied. "It will not be jumped," retorted the Count and rode on towards the exit.

Colonel Domecq trotted Vaqui into the ring. The bell rang and away they went. With fast, drumming hoofs Vaqui approached the Parallel Bars—a tremendous fence to face any horse.

Vaqui and its rider looked absolutely right, and when they took off there was no doubt as to the result. To the thunder of cheering they cleared the obstacle.

The Colonel swept out wide, gaining all the ground that was available before coming to the Wall. Vaqui had the heart of a lion and there was no refusal. The horse soared from the ground and I saw its forelegs